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NINTH
ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
VERMONT BOARD OF EDUCATION,
WITH THE
REPORT OF THE SECRETARY
MADE TO THE BOARD
SEPTEMBER, 1865.

BURLINGTON:
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REPORT.

To the Honorable the Legislature of the State of Vermont :

GENTLEMEN :

In conformity to law, the Board of Education herewith submit their Ninth Annual Report.

Within the last year, the want which has long been felt of a suitable book for instruction in the geography and history of Vermont, has been supplied by the publication of a text-book on those subjects by the Rev. Samuel R. Hall, L. L. D. This work, having been carefully examined by the Board, both before and since its publication, is regarded by them as admirably calculated to answer the purpose of familiarizing our children and youth with a department of knowledge which has hitherto been, though of necessity, too much neglected. It is confidently believed that if this text-book is thoroughly introduced into the common schools of the State, and the study of it faithfully prosecuted, it will in due season make the people of Vermont not only better acquainted with their own State, but more ardently and more intelligently attached to it; and the Board urgently recommend parents as well as teachers to secure for it a speedy and universal introduction into our schools.

In the same volume is contained the Constitution of the United States, with notes and questions prepared by direction of the Board. This has been done with the hope that youth of a suitable age in our schools may be induced to acquaint

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themselves with the leading provisions of that important document. The war which has filled our country with distress during the last four years had its origin in a misunderstanding or misinterpretation of that instrument. Had all the people understood its provisions, and understood them alike, the war would not have taken place; or, had it taken place, would have lacked the specious pretext upon which it was commenced. Peace, patriotism, and good citizenship in the future, depend, in no small degree, upon the general diffusion of a knowledge of the Constitution, and obedience to its provisions. Many of the interpretations given in these notes have been sanctioned by the Supreme Court of the United States, and the most important of them have also been sanctioned by the dread tribunal of war. It is hoped that they will be studied by the youth in all our schools, and made the basis of their education for the duties of citizenship soon to be devolved upon them.

A most important and interesting fact in the recent history of our common schools is the steady and systematic transference of the business of education from male to female teachers. The following table of the number of weeks taught by male and female teachers during the last five years will show what a material change has taken place in that regard.

Year.	Weeks by male teachers.	By female teachers.
1859—60	15,879	47,671
1860—61	15,950	48,798
1861—62	14,500	51,065
1862—63	11,136	52,098
1863—64	10,413	53,994

It appears by this table that, in five years, the number of weeks taught by male teachers has decreased 5,466, and the number taught by female teachers has increased 6,323. The change has gone on so steadily from year to year that it can

not but be the result of a force which is powerful and constant in its operations. The school districts in this State are corporate bodies, as independent of each other, as the United States are of Canada. But in these independent bodies, uninfluenced by each other, and exempt, in this particular, from legislative control, a movement has been going on, which in its uniformity and steadiness, resembles the operation of a law of nature. It indicates that these independent corporations are becoming possessed, to no small degree, of an organic unity, and inspired by the spirit of a common system. The movement has not been a spontaneous one, but the result of efforts made directly for that purpose. While it has been occasioned in part by the demands of the war upon young men, it has also been occasioned—and, it is believed, in greater measure—by a growing conviction of the public mind that female teachers are preferable to male. The Board desire to strengthen this conviction by calling attention to some considerations which show it to be well grounded.

Let the change be considered from an economical point of view. Had the relative proportion of male and female teachers been the same in 1863–64 as in 1859–60 there would have been taught by male teachers 15,879 weeks of school. The number of weeks actually taught was 10,413, being less by 5,466 weeks, equivalent to $1,366\frac{1}{2}$ months. Now the average wages per month of male teachers in 1863–64 was \$20,48. Had the $1,366\frac{1}{2}$ months been taught by male teachers, the cost of tuition would have been \$27,985,92. But the average wages of female teachers during the same period was \$8,16, and the actual cost of those $1,366\frac{1}{2}$ months of instruction was \$11,150,64. The difference in the expense, therefore, is \$16,835, 22; a sum not unworthy of consideration, when all public ex-

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penses are, and must need be, for a generation to come, exceedingly burdensome. Such is the economy of employing female teachers. But aside from this, and more than this, there can be no doubt that the actual educational gain, the gain in social, moral and intellectual culture, is much greater and more important than the pecuniary gain.

In expressing these views the Board do not wish to be understood as approving the low rate of wages paid to female teachers. There is no class of persons in the community, (unless ministers of the gospel may be excepted,) so faithful, so self-sacrificing, so devoted to duty, and yet so inadequately compensated. Their compensation last year was greater than ever before, and yet it averaged, exclusive of board, only \$8.16 per month, hardly more than the average wages of an uneducated Irish girl for doing household drudgery, much less than the average wages of young women in milliner's shops and factories. What inducement is there for them to spend time, and labor, and money in preparation for an employment which yields them less than a hundred dollars a year, when with no outlay at all they can easily procure far more remunerative employment? Great injustice is done them by making such inadequate recompense for their services; and unless public sentiment on this subject is corrected and a more equitable rate of compensation established, school committees in quest of female teachers will experience yet more frequently than they now do, the mortification of finding themselves outbid by the agents of factories, who are willing to pay more for superintending a spinning frame or a loom than the people are willing to pay for weaving the infinitely precious tissue of intellectual and moral character.

But great as is the injustice done to the teachers by this inadequate compensation, a still greater injustice is done to the children and youth by a policy which tends to deprive them of

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female teachers. Contemporaneous with the gradual change from male to female teachers which has been mentioned, there has taken place a gradual improvement in the schools of the State; until now, when female teachers are more numerous than ever before, the reports of town superintendents, as well as the personal observation of the Board and of its Secretary, all warrant the assertion that the schools are in better condition than ever before. It is impossible not to recognize the vital relation between the two facts. One of them is, in no small measure, the legitimate result of the other. The schools are better because the teachers are better, and one reason why the teachers are better, is, that so many more of them are female teachers. Females are peculiarly adapted by nature to the work of teaching. Quick sensibilities, ardent sympathies, natural love for the true, the beautiful and the good—patience, perseverance, and enthusiasm, eminently qualify them for that employment. Except in the family, nowhere does woman so truly occupy her appropriate sphere as in the school-room. The occupation of teaching harmonizes with her character, and in no other employment can she achieve greater success. There is force and truth in the remark of an eminent teacher, that “it is a rare thing to find a man who has a gift for teaching, and it is an equally rare thing to find a woman who cannot teach well.”

Especially is the superiority of female teachers apparent in the departments of morals and manners. Among the things which the statute requires to be taught in the common schools is “good behavior.” Whether that phrase is used in an ethical or social sense, the department of “good behavior” is one of the most important in which instruction can be given, and one which most powerfully affects the future happiness and usefulness of pupils. In this department the superior merits

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of female teachers are eminently conspicuous. They possess those delicate arts which win the confidence and secure the affection of the young, and thus enable them to exert an easy and unconscious influence in improving the morals and refining the manners. Their gentle reproofs accomplish what the severer punishments inflicted by teachers of the other sex fail to secure, and by an assiduous cultivation of the better feelings they most effectively hold in check those which need to be suppressed.

These two important considerations, then, the superior economy of employing female teachers, and the superior merits of such teachers, furnish occasion for gratulation that so large a proportion of the schools is now taught by them, and for hope that the proportion will yet be increased.

Referring to the Report of the Secretary for statistics and details, the Board have only to say generally, in conclusion, that the present condition of our common schools is as honorable to the people of Vermont, and as encouraging to the friends of social and public progress, as it is creditable to the teachers and officers through whose agency they have been brought into that condition. As among the strongest bulwarks of present prosperity, and surest foundations of good hope for the future, we renewedly commend them to the fostering care of the legislature and the people,

And remain, very respectfully,

JOHN GREGORY SMITH, *ex officio*,
PAUL DILLINGHAM, " "
HILAND HALL, " "
PLINY H. WHITE,
MERRITT CLARK.

} Board
of
Education

Secretary's Report.



SECRETARY'S REPORT.

VERMONT BOARD OF EDUCATION, }
SECRETARY'S OFFICE, AUGUST, A. D. 1865. }

The law of the State provides that the Secretary of the Board shall

"—prepare and present to the Board of Education, on the first day of their annual session, a report of his official doings for the preceding year, and a statement of the condition of the common schools in the State; of the expenditures of the school monies therein; and such suggestions for improving their organization and modes of instruction, together with such other information in regard to systems of instruction in other States and Countries, as he shall deem proper."

To the Hon. Vermont Board of Education :

In accordance with the foregoing provision of law, I now present the Ninth Annual Report of this department.

An effort has been made fully to discharge the various duties prescribed by law for the Secretary, during the preceding year. In the main, these duties vary but little from year to year, the preparation of the School Registers and statistical schedules and their distribution, the holding of the Teachers' Institutes, and the general visitation of the State, being annually required, and retaining the same general characteristics. The specific direction of the Board, requiring special attention to be given to making the subject of Graded Schools a prominent topic before the public mind, has made it necessary to give more than the usual proportion of time to the visitation of localities particularly adapted to the establishment and support of Graded Schools. In order to accomplish this object somewhat less time has, of necessity, been given to other places, but the whole amount of labor performed has been not less than usual, while its accomplishment has required more than the usual time and travel.

TEACHERS' INSTITUTES.

Agreeably to the provisions of the law, fourteen Institutes have been held during the year, one in each County; and while it is neither practicable nor expedient to give a very minute account of all of these meetings, I proceed to give a hasty sketch of each, according to previous custom in this State, and as responsive to the general expectation and desire.

The first Institute was held at Vergennes, for the County of Addison, in the new and beautiful public school house recently erected in that city. The length of time of notice was shortened by the desire of the citizens that the new school house should be dedicated to its own proper purpose by holding an Institute therein previous to the opening of the schools, appointed for a time then close at hand. This brevity of notice, and an extremely unfavorable state of the weather and the roads, diminished the attendance of teachers from abroad; still, quite a number attended from other towns in the County. The Institute began on the evening of October 13th, and was from the first very fully attended by the citizens, who in every possible way exhibited a deep interest in its success. His Honor, the Mayor, George W. Grandey, was very attentive and efficient in providing for the accommodation of strangers, and securing all needed facilities. During the session, and as illustrative of the importance of physical culture, Miss M. J. Newmarch, a pupil of Dr. Dio Lewis, gave several exhibitions of gymnastic exercises adapted to introduction into the common school, which deservedly attracted attention. A very pleasant feature of the session was furnished in the music of an excellent choir of adult singers, and in the singing of a class of the school children trained by Mr. Scott, of Vergennes. The beauty of the school house, and the completeness of its furnishing and arrangement—the pleasant music, and the large attendance and deep interest of the people of the city—all combined to give the Institute marked success.

The new School House in which the Institute was held, is a well built, convenient and well located building of three stories, standing in the midst of the city, and commanding a most attractive view of the immediate vicinity, with a distant and commanding prospect of the Adirondacks in New York. Without any extravagance or undue expense, the building is neat, attractive and as commodious as it is airy and well lit. It is a model, and an ornament of which every citizen of Vergennes may well be proud.

The first Teachers' Institute held under the auspices of the Board of Education occurred in Vergennes in 1857—and I remember distinctly beginning an afternoon session of that meeting in the presence of only one hearer in the not very remarkably prepossessing town hall. The contrast between a single hearer in the lonesome town hall in 1857, and the throng of intelligent and thoughtful people gathered in the beautiful Audience Hall of the new school house,—the result of the discussions and labors of years—may well be received as a cheering indication of decided progress.

The second Institute was held in the Congregational Church in Sheldon, for the County of Franklin, on the 6th and 7th days of December. Here the attendance, both of teachers and citizens, though not very large, was respectable, and in view of the fact that a long continued rain had made the road almost impassable, was quite encouraging. Rev. Mr. Fay, the Superintendent of St. Albans, with a large proportion of teachers from that town, were in attendance, and assisted very acceptably in the discussions of the occasion. Rev. Geo. B. Tolman, Superintendent of Sheldon, was very active in promoting the success of the Institute, and took part in its operations. Some of the citizens of Sheldon had desired the location there of an Institute, that an opportunity might be given for a more full and complete discussion of the feasibility and expedience of establishing in that locality a Graded School; and since the Institute was held, a consolidation of Districts and a gradation of schools have been attained, and a decided improvement of the condition of the schools has been secured.

The third Institute was held in the Congregational Church in Charlotte, in the County of Chittenden, on the 9th and 10th days of December. Here, in one of the richest agricultural regions of the State, the prevalent and uniform prosperity of the people seems to have affected the public sentiment unfavorably to the cause of popular education. The resident farmers, abundantly able to educate their own children where they choose, and to whatever extent they please, seem to have grown somewhat unmindful of the general claim of children to an adequate provision for education. Two Districts in this town have been for many years entirely destitute of schools, and in one no school house has existed for a long period. And yet, for thoughtful intelligence and high moral character, this community is second to none in the State. And when the Institute assembled here, there seemed no limit to the cordial hos-

pitality extended by the citizens, and the interest shown in the discussion of the general subject. The Institute, though not largely attended, seemed to leave a wholesome influence behind it. Rev. C. M. Seaton, the Superintendent, and the leading citizens of the town were active in lending all needed assistance.

The fourth Institute was held in the Congregational Church at Waitsfield, in the County of Washington, on the 13th and 14th of December. Here the attendance both of citizens and teachers was very large, unusually so ; and a large number of the older and more influential of citizens of the vicinity were present throughout the session, and, in various ways signified their appreciation of the weight of the topics discussed. Quite a number of the Town Superintendents of the various towns of the county also were present, and the Institute seemed to be well received. Much of the success attained was owing to the interest and active assistance given by the Town Superintendent, Rev. A. B. Dascomb.

The fifth Institute began its session in the Congregational Church in Hydepark, in the County of Lamoille, on the 16th and 17th days of December. The session of the Court prevented the attendance of many who would otherwise have been present, but the church was well filled throughout the session, and there were more teachers and Superintendents than are often seen at once. Rev. Mr. Baker, Superintendent of Hydepark, Rev. Mr. Dougherty, Superintendent of Johnson, with Mr. Pearl, teacher of Johnson Academy, Rev. Mr. Bartlett, Superintendent of Morristown, Rev. Mr. Herrick, Superintendent of Wolcott, Mr. Sanborne, Principal of Stowe Graded School, and Lieut. Col. Benton, of Hydepark, were all present, and assisted in the exercises. From the first organization of the Board no county has shown a deeper interest in general education than Lamoille, and among its clergymen, particularly, have always been found many of the staunchest friends of the schools.

The sixth Institute began on the 20th of December at South Troy, for the County of Orleans, in the Methodist Church. For many years a large attendance upon the Institute has been expected, as a matter of course, in the County of Orleans, and the number present here was as great as usual ; it was indeed remarkably well attended. Not only teachers in large numbers, but parents and citizens were present, and seemed stirred by a common interest. Rev. Messrs. Liscom, from South Troy, Smith from Westfield, Perkins from Glover, and Frink, from Derby ;

and M. F. Varney, of North Troy, and G. W. Todd, Principals of leading Academies in the County, were present and took part in the exercises. Mr. Todd addressed the Institute on the importance of so shaping our methods of instruction as most thoroughly to develop thought; and Mr. Varney gave an able and interesting discussion of Fractions. J. Young, Esq., of South Troy, was indefatigable in providing for the accommodation of those attending, and gave all needed assistance. The villages of South Troy and Westfield were filled with members from abroad. The session is believed to have been more than usually successful.

The seventh Institute was held at Canaan, in Essex County, on the 26th and 27th of December. There being no church in the goodly town of Canaan, the meeting was held in a rather unprepossessing School house, remarkable for neither architectural beauty nor convenience. The loan of a church on the New Hampshire side of the river was tendered by the citizens, but it was not thought best to hold the session of the Institute in another State. The nature of the gathering was not very fully understood in the first place, but the attendance soon became quite large. Teachers and friends of education were in attendance from the neighboring Province of Canada, and from a distance of many miles in New Hampshire. W. S. Ladd, Esq., of Colebrook, in New Hampshire, addressed the Institute very acceptably at one evening session, on the true value of the common schools. G. W. Hartshorn, Esq., the Town Superintendent of Canaan, was particularly interested and efficient in rendering assistance. I have been often assured that another Institute in the same locality would meet a more cordial welcome and find a much larger attendance.

The eighth Institute was held at Isle La Motte, on the 7th and 8th days of February, 1865. The session was held in the Methodist Church and was attended by a large proportion of the entire population of the Island, and by a respectable representation of teachers and others from other parts of the county. The greater portion of this county, being from its geographical position somewhat difficult of access for a considerable portion of the year, is by that fact relieved from many of the calls upon public attention that operate upon other sections, and for this reason perhaps I have found a more general and hearty interest in the discussion of educational matters manifesting itself among the people of Grand Isle County than is common in the State. This was especially the case at the present Institute. The

whole people seemed to have turned out, and apparently with a purpose of giving serious and thoughtful attention to whatever might seem worthy thereof. I consider the Institute at Isle La Motte to have been decidedly successful.

The ninth Institute was held in Proctorsville, in the County of Windsor, on the 6th day of June. The number in attendance was very large, even for Windsor County, where a large audience may generally be expected. And, from the facilities afforded by the Rail Roads many teachers and others were present from three other counties. Rev. Mr. Brown, Superintendent of Cavendish, Rev. Mr. Freeman, of Proctorsville, and Rev. Mr. Archibald, of Mount Holley, were present, and by participating in the discussions, added largely to the interest and value of the session. M. O. Hyde, Principal of Black River Academy at Ludlow, addressed the Institute on the proper method of conducting recitations, and on this occasion, as frequently occurs in the Institutes in this State, was illustrated the fact that the earnest and practical instructions of teachers actually engaged in the conduct of schools are among the most valuable exercises that can be introduced. Such men thoroughly appreciating the thousand difficulties that stand in the way of successful teaching, and fresh from the task of surmounting them, are often more competent than others can be in giving suggestions for improving the methods prevalent in the schools.

The tenth Institute was held in Fayetteville, in the County of Windham, on the 9th and 10th days of June. The meeting was held in the Congregational Church, and was quite largely attended. Mr. Pratt, the Town Superintendent, had provided for the session by making all necessary arrangements, and gave his care and attention through the session. The Institute was favored in receiving the instructions, among others, of A. H. Bingham, late Principal of Westfield Academy, in Massachusetts, and of B. F. Bingham, Principal of the Brattleboro High School, two of our most successful teachers. The suggestions of these gentlemen, particularly in reference to the best method of teaching intellectual arithmetic, were exceedingly useful and were well received.

The eleventh Institute was held in the Congregational Church in Benson, in the County of Rutland, on the 13th and 14th days of June. From the first organization of the Board, Rutland County has been second to no other in the State in the extent and depth of the interest displayed in all matters pertaining to education. Several of the largest Institutes held in the State

have occurred in this county, and this year gave no indications of a diminution of interest. In the annual March Meeting of the town the location of the Institute was by special action selected, and a large Committee then appointed to perfect and execute arrangements for the accommodation of those who might attend. And during the first day of the session nearly or quite one hundred teachers were brought, in carriages furnished by the citizens, from Fairhaven, a distance of some ten miles; and not only thus, but by a very large attendance of the citizens themselves upon the exercises was a very great interest manifested in the success of the Institute and in the general progress of educational advancement. And in all respects the Institute at Benson may be considered to have been successful.

The twelfth Institute began its session in Rupert, in the County of Bennington, on the 16th and 17th days of June. The session was held here by special invitation, and in order to bring within its influence a number of towns that hitherto, from difficulty of access and distance, had seldom been represented in these meetings. And the object aimed at was attained, and very many who had never attended an Institute before, were present and seemed interested and gratified. The attendance, both of citizens and of teachers, was quite large, and a good effect was apparently produced. Mr. L. A. Knight, the Principal of North Bennington Academy, assisted in sustaining the interest of the occasion by participating in the exercises, and addressed the Institute very acceptably.

The session of the thirteenth Institute began in the Academy in Corinth, on the 20th and 21st days of June, and was quite fully attended for an Institute located so remotely from the lines of rail road travel. Here, as in the last instance, it was hoped that the attendance of many not habitually present might be secured, and so it was. Very many new faces, both of teachers and of Superintendents, presented themselves, and thus the Institute was brought to bear upon a new class of hearers. Mr. C. C. Sargent, the Town Superintendent of Corinth, was uniting in his efforts to secure the comfort of all who were present and assisted in the instruction of the Institute. Rev. Mr. Britton, Town Superintendent of Bradford, attended with most of the teachers of that town, and also addressed the Institute in his usual earnest and judicious manner.

The fourteenth Institute, and the last for the year, was held at East Hardwick, for the County of Caledonia, on the 23d and

24th of June, in the Congregational Church. An educational meeting of any kind has seldom failed to gather a thoughtful and interested audience in this section of the State, and in the present instance the Institute conformed to the usual rule, and was favored with a very large and intelligent audience. Dr. Hyde, the town Superintendent, had cheerfully attended to all necessary preliminary arrangements, and was very attentive and watchful. And one of the most pleasant exercises of the gathering was found in an account given by the Superintendent of the evident benefit accruing to the schools from a series of public meetings of the teachers for public discussions of methods of teaching, which were largely attended by the parents and citizens, and contributed to increase and deepen the general interest felt in the schools. The meetings were enlivened by very excellent music furnished by a choir of singers, and every indication was given that the session of the Institute would leave a sound and wholesome influence behind it.

REMARKS UPON THE INSTITUTES.

It gives me pleasure to state that during the past year, as heretofore, the indications of continued improvement and advancement, as furnished by the course of Institutes, are full of encouragement. As before remarked, several of the Institutes were located in places remote, somewhat, from the railroads, and in localities comparatively difficult of access, for the special purpose of giving opportunities to reach classes of our population that had not habitually attended these meetings. Very few of them, during the last year, have been holden in the larger and more populous towns, but notwithstanding this, and notwithstanding the fact that none of the gatherings of the past year have been as large as have sometimes occurred, still the attendance upon them, taken together, has, I believe, been fully as large as ever before, and I think by means of the fourteen Institutes, direct access has been given to at least as many as seven thousand different minds, during the year.— And it has been found often that very large audiences would be gathered in localities so remote, and so thinly populated, that nothing more than a small attendance would have been reasonably anticipated. Indeed, often the larger audiences have gathered in the smaller places.

And in spite of the excessive preoccupation of the minds of all in the exciting and engrossing events of public and national importance, the Institutes have been to the full as heartily and

warmly received as ever before. This is the impression left by observation upon my own mind, and it will be seen that such impression is entirely corroborated in the extracts from the reports of Superintendents, quoted in the report elsewhere.

No one can visit the schools of the present day and carefully observe them without a conviction that a decided improvement in methods of instruction, and in manner and efficiency of discipline, has been manifested in a large proportion of them, during the few recent years. And it is also evident that at least a share of this perceptible improvement may justly be attributed to the operation of the Institutes. While in the vocation of teaching, as in other vocations, there will always be found some, and perhaps many, who are either so wise or so otherwise, that they are beyond all hope of receiving any benefit from the Institutes, or indeed many times from any mere human agency; there will, on the other hand, be found many that are willing and anxious to avail themselves of every opportunity of improvement. This is prominently true of many of the younger teachers,—particularly of the younger class of female teachers. Zealous in their work and anxious to excel, while at the same time abundantly conscious of deficiency, many of this class appropriate and carefully treasure up such suggestions and cautions as they may meet at the Institutes, and taking them back with them to their sphere of labor, make a judicious appropriation of them, and often to the very apparent advantage of their schools.

The character of the Institutes in our State is very different from the character of similar organizations in other States, that are known by the same designation, and often seems to demand something of explanation. Our own Institutes are less expensive, are shorter in duration, are more practical in character and more directly aimed at the common schools, and address themselves more generally to the citizens and parents, than is customary in any of the other States. And this peculiar character has been assumed partly as a matter of choice, and has been partly induced by necessity.

The whole series of fourteen receive for their support less than is often bestowed upon a single one in other States, and, so far, as a matter of inevitable necessity they must be less expensive and must accomplish less work, and with less available assistance than can be furnished where ten times as much money is given for their support. So that the comparative brevity of their session, and the absence of those instructors of com-

manding character that are found elsewhere, is partly inevitable. But this assumption of character is not entirely and exclusively induced by necessity, for, with an unlimited amount of means at command, many of the same characteristics would probably be retained in obedience to the dictates of sound policy.

To effect the greatest possible improvement in the schools, is the special aim of Teachers' Institutes, and in whatever State they may be held, their primary duty is to address themselves directly to the relief of the prominent difficulties and obstacles in the way of school improvement, in the first instance. The character of these prominent difficulties then, will, to a great degree, prescribe the character of the Institutes, and this will vary under different circumstances. The leading and most effective causes of embarrassment and failure in the schools in our State are two; first a lack of active and intelligent interest in the schools on the part of parents and citizens, and second the failure of teachers thoroughly to discharge their duties.

The first is by far the most important, and indeed is indirectly at least, the primary cause of all other school troubles. Everywhere, in other States as well as in our own, it may be confidently stated, that the excellence and efficiency of the schools will be found to be directly proportionate to the actual interest felt and manifested towards them. This lack of an actual and energetic interest has, in past time, been particularly apparent in this State, as is abundantly indicated by the character of school houses, the small average attendance, the irregularity and tardiness, the short duration of schools, the lack of visitation and the small annual expenditure. And this state of feeling comes partly from the inadequate provision formerly existing for regular and extensive visitation; and for frequent and persistent agitation in regard to popular education on the part of the State; and partly from the failure, for a number of years, to carry out and fulfil the requirements of the school system such as it was. Herein consisted the main difference between our own State and others noted for great school improvement. Here, for many years, educational meetings and discussions were comparatively infrequent; the general mind not being frequently turned in this direction ceased to give to the schools the attention that in right of their importance belonged to them. And thus while the importance of education to republicanism was conceded, and the theory of

the school system was not denied, it was passively rather than actively done. A thousand evil consequences of necessity followed. The attendance upon the school meetings diminished; leading men declined to act in any official capacity connected with the schools; the conveniences and equipments of the school-houses, and the houses themselves were neglected; inferior teachers were employed; a lower comparative rate of compensation was given to the teachers, and private and select schools multiplied to the great detriment of the public schools. The most direct remedy for all these evils was plainly a regular appeal through a discussion that should deal very plainly with the facts involved, in frequent expositions, to the good sense and patriotism of the people. For this special purpose, it is true, the general visitation of the State was intended to provide—but at the same time, so inadequate must even that provision be, that in giving to the Institutes the character that should best subserve the interests of the schools and most effectively and rapidly relieve them from the evils under which they labored by striking directly at their principal source,—it seemed inevitable that they should be so shaped and directed as to address themselves as well to the parents and citizens, with the view of arousing a more active interest, on their part, as towards the teachers themselves.

But such discussion, so directed specially to the citizens, in order to be eminently useful, must be eminently practical, and deal rather with the actual condition of the schools as discovered by actual inspection, than with abstract propositions, or truistic generalities. But a discussion of such character, thus dealing with facts, many of which would be unpleasant, which would be borne with when coming from an agent of the State whose known official duty required it from him, would scarcely be tolerated from any stranger, however high his character. Hence, so far as this work is concerned and is necessary to be done in the Institutes, it must of necessity be performed either by the Secretary or the Town Superintendents of schools.

Then again, as regards the character that the Institutes should assume in order to produce the best possible effect upon the teachers, upon whom such effect may be hoped, it is evident that such favorable influence must operate, if at all, in two main directions. It must operate morally upon the teachers by quickening their appreciation of the responsibilities of their vocation, by purifying their motives, elevating their aspirations and strengthening their resolution: and it must operate

intellectually upon them, in imparting better methods of instruction and inducing their adoption. The average age of the teachers employed in the common schools in this State, is probably less than in any other of the New England States; and the natural effects of this immaturity in our teachers are enhanced by a prevalent frequency of change greater than is found elsewhere. It is particularly the younger teachers upon whom the most perceptible effect, by the operation of the Institute may most reasonably be expected; and every effort should be made in shaping the character of the Institutes, so to direct them as to attract the largest number of the younger teachers. There are few of this class that are not entirely conscious of their deficiencies, and many of them are painfully so. Thus diffident and distrustful, they would be deterred from attendance upon the Institutes where they were to be publicly questioned and catechized, and their deficiencies exposed. No such public and rigid examination and exposure would be desirable or expedient, then, as far as the attendance of the younger and less experienced teachers is concerned.

The opposition, either open or latent, of parents to the adoption of new customs and methods, however manifestly they may be shown to be better, is the chief obstacle to all improvement in instruction; and young teachers especially need assistance to enable them to surmount this obstacle. Now the best assistance that can be given them will come from a thorough discussion and comparison of methods of teaching in the presence of the parents and teachers, for general opposition to methods whose correctness and efficiency has been publicly vindicated will not long survive in communities where such vindication has occurred. And all considerations addressed to the moral sense of teachers, with the view of leading them to feel more sensibly and more fully the true importance and responsibility of the relations which they hold to parents, children and the community, come with far greater power when received by the teachers and parents and citizens in common audience. And this is another reason for so shaping the Institutes as not particularly and exclusively to bear upon teachers alone, but to interest all classes at the same time.

A prevalent tendency to under-estimate the comparative importance of elementary instruction is easily discernible, too, in the practice of our teachers, and particularly of many of the younger and inexperienced teachers. And the difficulty of counteracting this tendency is increased by the almost univer-

sal sympathy felt with this tendency by the parents, everywhere. This evil is much increased also by the frequent and often unnecessary changes of teachers, so strikingly characteristic of our state. Our statistics show that, while the average duration of our schools is only about six months, a majority of the districts employ two teachers in each year. The effects of this frequent shifting of teachers would be more tolerable, were the instructions received of a thorough and exhaustive nature; but where, as is too often the case, the elementary and indispensable branches are hastily and superficially taught in order the sooner to reach the higher grades of topics, a frequent change of teachers makes the schools to a great degree entirely useless.

As far as methods of instruction are concerned, the comparative neglect of thoroughness in elementary teaching may be called the dominant deficiency of our schools, and as I have said, this deficiency is aggravated by the sympathy felt and manifested by the parents with the want of appreciation of the importance of primary teaching. Younger teachers feel themselves that success in teaching the more advanced branches of study requires both capacity and labor, while they suppose that no great amount of either pains or application are requisite to reasonable success in teaching reading, spelling, or the rudiments of arithmetic and geography; and they are made by actual communication, fully aware that most parents entirely concur in such notions.

A statement that in truth more genius, capacity and tact are required successfully to impart to the immature and untrained minds of the young children an adequate and complete knowledge of the fundamental principles of any of the various branches taught in the schools, than is really necessary to give success in teaching more advanced studies to minds more matured and thoroughly grounded in elementary knowledge, would startle rather than convince a general audience; and yet no educational announcement is more true, or susceptible of more easy demonstration.

In order, then, fully to accomplish its work, the Institutes must not only set forth in the clearest possible light the necessity of thorough elementary teaching, as a matter of theory, and in such a manner as to carry conviction to parents as well as teachers; but it must develop and carry out this theory, by giving the greater portion of its time and labor to repeated expositions of the best methods of teaching the

elements of reading, spelling, geography, grammar, arithmetic, &c., &c. The great need is, not so much that the general mind should be entertained and informed by essays and addresses, from men of great literary and scientific reputation, upon the higher and more general and abstract phases of the great general subject of education, as that teachers and parents and superintendents and citizens should all be induced to select, and then concur in adopting the best and most efficacious methods of teaching all the various branches required by law to be taught in the common schools; and this work can only be well done by practical teachers, who are or have been actually engaged in the work of giving instruction in the schools.

The rate of compensation given to teachers in this State is comparatively small, and in the case of the younger and less experienced teachers, is so small that, in order to secure their attendance upon the Institutes, or indeed to bring them reasonably within their reach, they need to be attended with the least possible expense. Were the sessions to be of many days duration, it could hardly be expected that citizens generally would or could conveniently entertain them without charge, and thus the necessary expense would prevent the attendance of the very class whose presence is most needed. But if the sessions of the Institutes were shortened, as for instance to endure for not more than two days, it then becomes a matter of no great inconvenience to entertain such as may attend, gratuitously, and so increase the number of teachers who would probably be present.

It is on account of these apparently valid reasons, as well as for others that might be named, that the character which they have assumed has been given to our Institutes, and this character will probably remain in the future, unless their circumstances should be materially changed. The effort has been to make them to be entirely practical, and to deal with the actual labor of the teacher in the school-room as required by existing laws, and so to manage them as if possible by sustaining the interests and receiving the attention of parents and citizens as well as teachers, to secure a combined effort of all to raise the character and increase the efficiency of the common schools. Geography, Grammar, Arithmetic, Reading, Spelling, and School-discipline are the topics to which most of the time and effort has been given, while other and general views have not been neglected. They have been addressed in a measure to the citizens and parents, and have always been by them largely

attended, and I believe are generally valued as an efficient instrument of school improvement. They have been limited to a session of two days, and now, for many years have always been cordially and hospitably received in all parts of the State without expense to the teachers, and for this unstinted and generous hospitality, the teachers, the cause of education and the State are under large obligation.

Having attended many of the Institutes of other States, I desire to say that some of the essays, addresses and instructions from the practical teachers engaged in our own schools, with which our Institutes have been favored, are in intrinsic value, and in practical adaptation to the actual necessities of our common school teachers, not inferior to any which I have listened to from the professional instructors employed in the Institutes of other States, and have been of great service.

I select and here present one from among the many valuable discussions furnished by our own teachers, as illustrative of what is stated, and because of its own value, as well as because it serves to give prominence here to a practical topic of the highest moment which very much needs more attention from teachers, Superintendents and all who have to do with our schools. It is an Essay on "Spelling," read by Charles H. Haynes.

ESSAY ON SPELLING.

READ BEFORE THE TEACHERS' INSTITUTE AT PERU, JUNE 24, 1864.

FELLOW TEACHERS :

The subject of Spelling, like the Temperance cause, is a harp of a thousand strings, every chord of which has been so often vibrated, that its pleasing melody has long since departed, and yet the harp has not been told.

Many able theorists have given us their views upon this most important subject, but have failed to produce the desired result, from the fact that they never reduce theory to practice.

By examining the introduction to most of our spelling books, we shall find that it consists of mere statements, without giving the reason therefor, while the first question which suggests itself to the mind of an American Teacher is, "Why?"

I have endeavored in this essay to sustain every statement by proofs drawn from the knowledge of laws which govern mental action.

Nothing need be said at this time, of the importance of spelling, for every teacher knows this, and every true teacher will diligently seek all means within his or her power, for the accomplishment of this most desirable object.

The first question which arises is, when, or at what age, should spelling, for the most part, be taught?

When we are learning to spell, we are merely learning forms and remembering the various ways in which these forms are combined to make words.

This process calls into action first, Perception, and second, Memory. In mere spelling no other powers of the mind are employed. It is evident, then, that spelling can best be taught when these powers are principal.

Psychology and experience teach us that the Perceptive faculties are the first developed, and for a time, this seems to be the only active power in the mind of the child. Soon the Reflective powers are developed, and the child now, instead of giving his attention to simply seeing and recognizing forms, inquires for the reason of things, and seeks to enter upon higher and more abstract branches of study.

In the average of American pupils, this latter power assumes the ascendancy at from ten to twelve years of age. Hence, we draw our conclusion that spelling should, for the most part, be accomplished before that age.

I believe it to be a fact that pupils from eight to ten, other things being equal, can commit the orthography of twice the number of words in a given time, that pupils over fourteen can commit.

Rev. B. G. Northrop, Agt. Mass. Board of Education, who has paid much attention to this subject, says, "every child of ordinary capacity can learn to spell all our common words before the age of twelve."

We answer our question, then, by saying, Spelling should be accomplished before the pupil is twelve years of age!

Much complaint has been preferred against our higher schools and seminaries for their seeming neglect of this branch of study, but every one will see the wrongfulness of this, for spelling should be mastered before the pupil enters the higher grades of our schools.

The error, then, is in our common schools; and reason would seem to point to a change here.

But I am met by the argument, "We give all the time we have to spelling in our common schools, how can we do more?"

Our answer is, *Take more time.* Give up some other classes. No pupil is fit to pursue the study of Grammar, or Geography, under the present system of book teaching, until he is at least eleven years of age. Let him spend the time usually given to these studies previous to that age, in spelling, and he will accomplish all the branches as early in life as by the present method, and with a much better understanding of each.

We try to do too much at once, and hence, fail to accomplish anything.

Our next question is, How shall spelling be taught? and first, are our spelling books adapted to the wants of our schools? In many of our text books we find hundreds of words which are seldom or never employed in actual life, and the learning of which will never benefit the common student. I do not disparage the learning of all the words in our language, if we have time, but let us learn the most important first.

Again, the system of classification employed is faulty, serving only to cultivate circumstantial memory, which is not a permanent relation. It also leads to many errors in pronunciation and inflection; for example, Teachers frequently misplace the accent in such words as the following when they occur in connection; Pronóuncé, Ré-nounce, Dé-nounce, Añ-nounce, &c., thus engendering in the pupil an erroneous pronunciation, which will be a stumbling block through life.

This error might be avoided, if a different system, or no system of classification was employed.

I would urge teachers not to confine themselves to the books in assigning lessons, for younger classes especially, but to select words, classifying them according to their use, print them upon the black-board, requiring the pupils to copy them upon their slates.

I shall speak more fully of this method in my Illustrations. The lessons should be short, and every word thoroughly committed before passing to another lesson.

How shall the pupil prepare his lesson? The knowledge of "How to play" may be innate; but experience teaches that the habit of correct study must be acquired, and it is of the first importance that teachers should be competent to instruct their pupils how to study.

It is frequently the case that teachers assign a certain number of times for the

lesson to be studied. Not long since I visited a school where the prescribed number was *ten* ! Nothing more fatal to the advancement of the pupil could be done, and I would consider such a teacher a fitter candidate for our Institution at Brattleboro' than for the school room !

The lesson should be studied but *once*. The reasons are plain. We study in order to remember the forms of the words. Memory depends upon attention, that is, the greater the degree of attention we give to any subject, the stronger it will be impressed upon the memory, and hence the more easily recalled.

Attention is merely a modification of a state of mind produced by prolonging that state. Then the time we may remember a thing, the orthography of a word for instance, depends upon the length of the mental state produced by thinking of that word.

Now if I have a lesson to commit, as for example, Cat, and Dog, I look first at Cat three seconds, then at Dog three seconds, and so continue alternately until I have studied my lesson ten times. Now let us notice what has been done. Ten images of each word, twenty in all, have been formed upon the retina of the eye and conveyed to the brain, each producing a change in the mental state. Thus we have twenty mental states in one minute, and these produced so rapidly that the memory takes cognizance of only a confused mass of forms, without regard to their proper arrangement to form words.

Now let me study as I propose, and notice the result. I fix my eye upon the first word, "Cat," an image is formed and a mental state is produced. I continue to look at the word for thirty seconds, the same image is continued and the mental state prolonged. I study the next word in a similar manner, with a like result.—Here I have two mental states in place of twenty, each being in the latter case ten times as long as the former, and hence I am enabled to recall the proper spelling, if studied by the last method.

Another disadvantage when the mental state is so frequently changed is, that the attention may be more easily distracted by what is taking place in the school room.

Then, fellow teachers, let your first instruction be *how to study*, and I assure you that by teaching your classes to study in the manner here proposed, you will confer a greater good than you can by a whole year's training in the usual way.

It seems proper in this connection to refer to the habit which obtains in many of our schools, of allowing the pupils to pronounce the lesson after being called forward for recitation. The same objection may be offered to this practice, as to the usual method of study. It only tends to confuse what may previously have been clear. And again some pupils will depend upon this reading to commit the lesson, judging that by this once pronouncing, they can remember it as long as the recitation continues, and this is their only care.

An argument in favor of this process was lately given me as follows. "The pupils will not pronounce the words correctly by themselves, hence, it is necessary to read them when they come to recite, in order that the teacher may correct the errors."

Let every rational teacher consider this argument. Is the time to correct the pronunciation after the wrong one has been instilled into the mind, or before?

You will all answer with me, before most certainly. Then if the lesson is to be read, it should be done at the time it is assigned, and by the teacher, instead of the pupil. Experience proves that it is easier to teach the right first, than to eradicate errors and then teach the truth.

We will now suppose the lesson to be assigned, read by the teacher, correctly studied by the pupil, and the class called forward for recitation. The first thing to notice is the position of the class.

In all cases the pupils should stand, for the mind acts with greater freedom when the body is standing. I would not allow a pupil to sit while reciting in any branch.

Curved lines are elements of beauty, as they suggest to us the pleasing attributes of the mind; while straight lines are elements of sublimity, as indicating vastness in extent; therefore I would, when possible, arrange my class in the form of a

curve ; but whether curved or otherwise, I would have them in perfect lines, and teach them to arrange themselves without "toeing a mark," for this will tend to cultivate good taste, as the object of thought will be the good appearance of the class, instead of the mark upon the floor.

The teacher should dictate the words to the pupil, but it should be understood that they will be pronounced but once, for otherwise, the pupils will become listless, and a general state of inattention will be the condition of the class.

In pronouncing, the teacher should avoid favoring the spelling, as for example, pronouncing *Verify*, *Verify*, or *Separate*, *Sepàrate*.

The pupil should repeat the word after the teacher in order that it may be certain that the word is understood, and also that they articulate sounds may indicate the spelling. Each syllable should be pronounced as spelled, and lastly the whole word. If the syllable consists of but one letter, it is customary to omit the pronunciation, but this should not be allowed. For example, in spelling *Verify*, the second syllable should be spelled *i* (long *i*) and pronounced *i*, (short *i*.) In pronouncing a syllable, be careful to give the same sounds as the same syllable would possess if the whole word was spoken.

The pupil should be allowed to try but *once* upon a word, for the second spelling can be only guessing, and too, it is unfair, for many words can be reasonably spelled in but two forms, for illustration, words ending with *tion* or *sion*. If *mansion* be first spelled with a "t," the second trial will surely be "s," while another pupil may have a much more difficult word which may be spelled in several different ways, and yet each give nearly the proper articulate elements.

The subject of "taking places" as it is termed, has been often discussed, and arguments pro and con offered in abundance. I find one serious objection to it.

All minds are not developed alike. A, at the age of seven, may be capable of learning the same lesson perfectly, that B, twelve years old, can learn indifferently.

Now if B. studies as diligently as A, he is entitled to the same credit. That is, if A. studies one hour and spells every word, and B. studies the same and misses half the words, (if this is all the time B. could give to the lesson, they both deserve equal credit, for merit is not alone in *succeeding* but in *trying*. If "taking places" was allowed, A. would gain unfairly over B.

When such a course is pursued, the pupil going above should always step behind the class, never front. First, as a lesson of propriety, and second, if he goes before he will step backward into the line, and as I have frequently observed will come in contact with some other pupils, while in moving behind the class he can see where to step.

There is one little point which, though not of vital importance, yet demands to be noticed. It is usual at the commencement of every study to give a definition of the study, and therefore a definition of Spelling should be given. It is usually given thus, "Combining the letters of a word in the order in which they occur is called spelling."

Now the spelling of every word should agree with the definition. Let us see if they do in the common mode of spelling. Take for example the word "Moon." The child says, "m-double o-n moon." We have no such letter as *double o*, therefore the letters have not been combined in the order in which they occur, and according to our definition the word has not been spelled. It should be given m-o-o-n moon.

It is a matter of much surprise that the practice of silent spelling, by writing, is not more frequently employed, since we learn the orthography of words mainly in order to be able to write them correctly.

I think it would be better if most of the spelling exercises were conducted in this way.

Let each pupil, in the higher classes, be provided with a *black-board* in which to write the words. (The younger classes might use slates or the black-board, and print their words.) These books, or slates, might be collected and corrected by some

pupil, or by the teacher. Let each misspelled word be checked, and this will place distinctly before each one just those words which demand particular attention. Then at the end of the week, or two weeks, give for a lesson all those words which have been misspelled.

As for definitions, no word should ever be passed until it is perfectly understood, but it is always preferable that the child should give the definition in his own words, as the object of all Education is not to teach the child to repeat the thoughts of others, but to *think for himself*.

The oral spelling exercises are usually liable to the charge of being monotonous, and hence fail to engage the attention of the class. I will now illustrate a few exercises which will serve to awaken an interest, and secure the attention of the class to the work.

FIRST METHOD

IS CALLED ASSOCIATE SPELLING. Each pupil gives one letter or syllable. Illustration—The word may be Perpendicular. No. 1 pronounces the word, No. 2 says "p," 3 says "e," 4 says "r," 5 says "per," and so continuing until the spelling is completed, when the word should be pronounced by the whole class.

The spelling should proceed as rapidly as though but one individual was giving the exercise.

This secures perfect attention.

SECOND METHOD,

CALLED CAPPING. In this exercise the teacher proposes a word to the first pupil who spells it, and then gives to the next a word, the first letter of which is the same as the last letter of his word. Illustration—School, Lady, Youth, Happiness, &c.

This is good as a review exercise. It teaches pupils to think quickly, and serves to cultivate "Language."

THIRD METHOD.

SENTENTIAL SPELLING. The teacher reads a whole sentence and each pupil will then spell one word in order, No. 1 spelling the first word, No. 2 the second, &c.—Illustration—"No whispering should ever be allowed in school." The lesson may be printed by the teacher upon the black board, or be given from the reading books. This method cultivates memory.

FOURTH METHOD.

CALLED EMPHATIC SPELLING. The teacher reads a sentence, requiring the pupils to spell in order (as in third method) the emphatic words. Illustration—The mind of youth is like a field of luxuriant soil, in which the seeds of vice or virtue germinate, and shoot forth with vigor, producing a glorious harvest of usefulness to mankind or a sickly growth of vice and misery.

This exercise cultivates the ear, and renders it peculiarly sensible to those nice distinctions of inflection which constitute the beauty of Reading or Singing.

FIFTH METHOD

Is an exercise in words alike in sound but differing in orthography. The teacher should assign for a lesson one word of each sound. The pupil is to find another, differing in the spelling, spell each, and construct a sentence employing each word properly. Illustration—The teacher may assign for the lesson, "Might," "Sail," "Right," "Knew," &c. The first word being given to a pupil he would spell Might, then Mite, and give a sentence as, "you might give me a mite."

Right, Write.—It is right to write letters.

Knew, New.—I knew the dress was not new.

This exercise cultivates comparison and Composition.

SIXTH METHOD

Is like the fifth, except the teacher dictates the sentence, requiring the words of similar sound to be spelled in the order in which they occur. Illustration—

The *beech* grew upon the *beach*.

He *adit* it to the price of the *adz*. *

He *ate* eight apples.

He *knows* he has a *nose*, &c.

* This word is sometimes spelled *adze*. When two spellings are authorized always employ the shorter and easier.

SEVENTH METHOD.

INDEPENDENT SPELLING. This is the method which should ordinarily be employed, as it prevents the unfairness of the usual recitations. By the old process if a word is misspelled, the same word is pronounced to the next in order who evidently has a better chance to give the correct orthography, and so in proportion to the numbers who have missed the word, has the next pupil less forms to choose from, and consequently is less liable to give an incorrect form.

To remedy this evil, the teacher should, if a mistake is made, take no notice of the fact, but dictate a new word to the next pupil who, if he notices the previous error, will spell the word missed instead of the one put to him. If he does not notice the error, then he is as much at fault as the one who first misspelled it, and new words should be dictated to each successive pupil until some one corrects the error, and takes his position above the one who gave the incorrect spelling. If the pupil spelling the word be already above the latter he should be placed, of course, at the head.

Recitations conducted in this manner will secure the closest attention of every member of the class to the work.

EIGHTH METHOD.

CLASSIFIED SPELLING. I have spoken of the faulty classification employed in our spelling books as the prime source of erroneous pronunciation.

A better system, I think, would be to classify words according to their use. For example, one lesson might comprise the names of all materials used in building; another, all parts of buildings; a third, all articles in the school-room; a fourth all farm tools; fifth, all farm products; sixth, carpenters tools; seventh, parts of human body, &c., &c. In this way we teach just those words which will be useful in actual life, and teach them in such a manner that the *thing* will be the object of thought, and not merely the name. This relation serves to aid the memory. In these exercises, vary the position of the class and method of conducting the recitation. Have them write upon paper one day, upon blackboard the next, orally the next, &c. When it is possible, induce the children to present the objects, the names of which they spell. In spelling the parts of the body, have the pupils place the hand in concert upon the parts.

The author's method is this. On stated days the pupils form their own spelling lessons. Given for subject, "The names of articles in a grocery store." The subject is given two days previous to the recitation. Twenty minutes is allowed for recitation, during which each pupil writes each name he has found. The books are then examined, and the misspelled words written upon the board for the next lesson. In spelling "Nouns," a little girl eleven years of age wrote *one thousand*,—only *three* misspelled!

NINTH METHOD.

Let each pupil bring in several difficult common words. No. 1 will propose one of his words to whom he may choose. If it be correctly spelled, the latter may in turn propose one of his words; but if it was misspelled, No. 1 himself shall spell it,

and the other pupil shall lose the privilege of proposing one of his words. Continue in this way until all the words are spelled or lost.

TENTH METHOD.

ON GEOMETRIC FORMS. Every school should be supplied with a complete set of geometric forms, and lessons may be given from them. The pupil spelling the name and choosing from all the forms the one to which this name is applied. Where a set of forms cannot be procured they may be represented upon the blackboard.

ELEVENTH METHOD.

GEOGRAPHICAL. Give for a lesson a State or Country, requiring the spelling of Counties or countries, Rivers, Capes, &c., &c. This is particularly useful in respect to our own state and country.

TWELFTH METHOD.

The teacher assigns for a lesson some primitive word as "care," requiring the pupils to form and spell all the derivatives as, Careful, Carefully, Carefulness, Careless, Carelessly, Carelessness, &c. Or from "Case" form Cascharden, Casknife, Casement, Casemate, Caseshot, Caseworm, &c.

THIRTEENTH METHOD.

ILLUSTRATED SPELLING. By this method the pupil illustrates the meaning of the word and gives its etymology. I will illustrate this method by the word Thermometer.

A pupil rises, holding in his hand a Thermometer and says, "I hold here an instrument employed for measuring heat, hence we might call it a heat-measurer, but we have a word which means heat measurer which is Thermometer." Close by spelling the word, and writing it upon the board. It may be interesting for the teacher to give an account of the invention, use, and manufacture of this instrument.

Many words may be thus illustrated and would interest the pupils, by teaching them that these words are not meaningless things, but contain in themselves the ideas which distinguishes the objects to which the names are applied.

FOURTEENTH METHOD

Consists in choosing sides and keeping an account of errors. The whole school may engage in this as a review exercise, and it may properly be employed at least once a week.

These are only a few of the methods which actual experience has proven to be practical, and peculiarly adapted to the end which they are designed to secure, viz: an increased interest in this most important branch of Education.

Every ingenious teacher will be constantly engaged in inventing ways by which pupils may be interested and benefited, and we hope that the compensation allowed will soon be sufficient to warrant a more thorough preparation for the work, and an increased expenditure of time and talent.

CONDITION OF THE SCHOOLS.

An inspection of the official reports of the Town Superintendents, who are charged with the supervision of the schools, and, in the discharge of their duties, are required to make frequent visitations to them, furnishes one of the best, if not the most reliable means of forming a correct opinion as to their actual condition. Before proceeding, then, to give the statisti-

cal summary, or my own observations, I present here, extracts from the returns of the Superintendents, made in response to the statistical questions. A moment's consideration will show that it is impossible to give, within the limits of the Annual Report, all that may be reported by all the Superintendents in reference to the schools; and that extracts from the reports are all that can be furnished. In making these extracts, the effort has been to give as wide spread, and general a view as is possible, by giving reports from all the different sections of the State, and thus to give a fair representation of these different sections, and of all the various and often conflicting views that are given of the school system and of its administration.

EXTRACTS FROM SUPERINTENDENTS' REPORTS.

At regards the School Registers and Annual Reports, I have to say, that great care and labor are required in keeping and making them out, in order to render them of any service, but they disclose some "astounding" facts, which very much need to be brought before the public. The Registers tell sad tales of "irregularity in attendance, and tardiness," and dismissals, the blame of which, is partly charged to parents, but not a little, also, on the *teachers*, as the different results in the same school district, under different teachers, abundantly show.

I regard the Teachers Institutes as very valuable indeed, not only to teachers, but what is equally necessary, in awakening a community to some suitable degree of interest in the schools. For teachers, they clearly are not *all* that is needed, they are too short, and consequently too much hurried.

We very much need a *State Normal School*; we want teachers trained to their work,—teachers acquainted with the most approved methods of instruction and discipline,—teachers who have made it their study, and who intend to make it their business to instruct the young. One *model teacher* in each town, could hardly fail to elevate all the schools.

A serious loss is sustained by *the too frequent change of teachers*, which is only the natural consequences of the annual change of the person filling the office of Prudential Committee. The law does not need altering, but practice does. In my report to the Town, I recommended the re-election of the same person, so as in effect to make the term of office for the Prudential Committee three years, instead of one, and that this committee seek a teacher with the intention of retaining the same during the whole time, if success warrants it. It will secure greater care in the selection, and offer to the person employed, a stimulus to do well, and to improve from term to term. As it is, the Prudential Committee is scarcely elected, before he must *supply* one, and have school opened, and he has scarcely time to correct his own mistakes, before he is out of office; and another takes his place, only to repeat the same fruitless experiment. The result is a series of experiments at the expense of the district, wherein, the district gets the benefit of no one's experience. In my judgment, full one-fourth of the profit of our schools is sacrificed to this pernicious system of rotation. There is no continuous and regular progress for the scholar, such as a judicious teacher, retained from term to term, might prescribe, and would feel under obligation to secure. My theory is, that the best teacher available should be employed, with the understanding that he is to be retained until there is a reasonable prospect of securing a better one.

A. A. BAKER, Cornwall.

I believe it is an unheard of thing, in our town, to print the Superintendent's report, so that I am unable to send you a copy,—but a few remarks on the state of our schools, and kindred topics, may be acceptable.

I reported to the town that "there had been more good teachers employed during the past year, in our town, than in any previous year since my acquaintance with the schools." Yet, I was compelled to say, "that the schools were far from being what they ought to be, or what they might have been, had the school rooms been furnished with suitable apparatus and other aids for illustration and elucidation, and had the efforts of teachers been promptly seconded by parents." A great obstacle to the support of good schools, is the smallness of many of our districts. Consolidation and the establishment of union and graded schools, were recommended as remedies for most of the evils from which we suffer. I am glad to say, the suggestion was received favorably by many, and the idea is gaining ground. I hope ere long, the small districts, with their diminutive school houses, will be among the things that were, and more attractive surroundings will take their places.

Our registers have been well kept the past year, as far as the teacher is concerned; but it is mortifying to report a great remissness on the part of district clerks, in filling out and filing them in the Town Clerk's office, according to law. They do not seem to understand that it is only by these statistics that a true knowledge of the financial condition of the schools is obtained, or that this knowledge is of the least importance. If district clerks (as has been suggested by some Superintendent, previously,) were required to file a certificate in the Town Clerk's office, that they had fulfilled the requirements of the law, in this respect, before receiving any of the public money, I think it would correct this non-compliance.

In regard to Teachers' Institutes, I know of but one class who oppose them, or grudge the meager allowance for their support, furnished by the State; it is those who never attended them, or have taken any pains to inform themselves of their operations or results. I rejoice that the practice of "boarding around" is to be known no more; I hear of no demurs as to the propriety and justice of the recent enactments terminating it.

MYRON ORVIS, Ferrisburgh.

I think the enactment, terminating the practice of "boarding around," is very injudicious. It would have been *much better* as it was, leaving it to the good sense of the district to determine which way they would prefer. In some localities, it is better for the teacher to board around, and in others, better for the teacher to board in one place. There would be grievances to be borne, as the law is now, and as it was; but the districts in Vermont are usually so situated, that it is generally as pleasant to board "around." In some localities, the teachers would fare better, to board around; they have a better opportunity to learn "human nature,"—they get better acquainted with the parents and the scholars. If the teacher exerts a good influence, it is better for the scholars and parents, for the teacher to be sometimes in the family; or, if the teacher exerts a bad influence, the parents can sooner detect it, than if he boarded all the time in one place. I could give many reasons why the present law should be repealed, but I have not time to enter into an argument at length, but will mention one or two cases that have come under my observation. It is generally managed to board the teacher at the *lowest price* possible. Some have bid off the board, who live in the extreme portion of the district, making it very inconvenient for the teacher, also making it look bad for the district. Some have bid off the board, where, but poor teachers would like to board at all, much less be compelled to board through a whole school term.

H. Z. CHURCHILL, Goshen.

The recent enactment, terminating the practice of "boarding around," is not well received in this vicinity. In these times of high taxation, it is thought that doubling the district taxes will bear heavy on the poor back districts, and will tend to break up their schools entirely; they could furnish wood and board, and not seem to feel it, like paying the money for it. Again, it is thought that in our rural districts, scholars will learn better, to board with teachers,—they are sooner acquainted, and lose that shyness, so characteristic in children who live back.

With regard to School Registers, I find that Clerks have sadly neglected their duty, so much so, that it is impossible to make out anything like a correct report.
SOLOMON DUNHAM, Hancock.

In looking over the very good report of the Vermont Board of Education for 1864, with the report of the Secretary of that Board, I can add no new ideas.—Could I think of one word to say that would impress the fact upon the people that good order is the very first necessary element towards having a good school, I would cheerfully do so.

In regard to the new law that terminates the boarding around, I like it very much, for many reasons; it is always embarrassing to teachers, and the best boarding places near the school houses have the work to do, therefore, making a very unequal arrangement. I think the law will produce a good effect, and give satisfaction generally. I know of no person in this vicinity who would rather see the children grow up in ignorance, than to pay his share on the Grand List, to have the children all sent to schools properly conducted.

JOSEPH MORSE, Leicester.

The recent enactment, terminating the practice of "boarding around," is, I am sorry to say, received with marked disfavor by those who have taxes to pay, and no children to educate, and in some cases it is working mischief, by stirring up this class of men, where there is a majority of them to vote down a school. But a better feeling will, I trust, soon prevail, and the opposition in time die out. Teachers, especially females, are of course delighted with the change.

A. U. ELDREDGE, Lincoln.

* * Our schools the past year have generally been under the care of skillful and successful teachers, some of them might be termed model schools. Some of the teachers awakened an interest in the cause of education, by getting up school celebrations, and thereby calling the attention of parents to the schools. We miss those fine teachers we had from our College before the war.

GEORGE SMITH, Middlebury.

My opinion of the above named "enactment" is, that it is too arbitrary. I think the law should be modified, so that it may be as the Prudential Committee and teachers can agree about boarding. Board and fuel, according to the provisions of the new law, will amount to fully as much as the teacher's wages, unless the teacher should be boarded in a *cheap place*, where he would be dissatisfied, and would not do as well for his school. Besides, taxes, and indeed everything, takes our cash so very fast, that I fear our teachers will not be as good as they otherwise would.

CHARLES E. ABELL, Orwell.

While I can say that the schools in this town have been good during the past year, with one exception, and the teachers earnest, and faithful in doing their duty, I regret to say, that the community at large have not taken that interest in the matter which its importance would seem to demand.

If it were a part of the duty of the Prudential Committee to keep away from the schools, then this town has been fortunate in its selection of Committees, for only three of them have visited the schools in their districts, and if a change in the office of Committee should, for any reason, be deemed advisable, there is material for the same sort left. Little better can be said in relation to the patrons of the school, so far as visiting them is concerned. One of the many good effects which would result from a more general practice of visiting schools by patrons, and learning from actual observation, what a difference there is in the methods pursued, and in the order maintained by the various teachers, would be the employment of teachers more than one term; as it is at present, it makes but little difference whether a teacher does well, or otherwise,—he is superseded at the next term. Again, teachers who, upon examination, exhibit a familiar acquaintance with the studies required by law, when they become engaged in the actual duties of teaching, show that they do not possess that happy faculty of interesting the children, and imparting instruction, that is so necessary to success in teaching. This peculiar faculty, or aptness to teach, cannot be ascertained otherwise than by visiting the schools; neither is it one of the legal requirements necessary to procure a certificate. Hence, it remains of the district, which has been so fortunate as to secure the services of a real *live*, *wide awake* teacher, to say, whether they will strive to retain the services of such a teacher, more than one term, even though it may cost a few dollars; or change teachers each term, and trust to luck for the result.

The act passed by the Legislature, last fall, placing all the expense of school, (except what is defrayed by the public money) on the Grand List, is another step towards perfecting that system of instruction, already inaugurated in this State. In a free country, should there not be free schools? In relation to the practice of "boarding around," teachers, instead of feeling like pilgrims in a strange land, wandering about the district, seeking for something to devour, will have an opportunity to rest, after the fatigue of the day, and prepare for the duties of the morrow.

There is one thing more, which I trust will in due time be deemed necessary, and that is, a Normal School. While I regard the Teachers' Institutes, as at present conducted, as well nigh indispensable, yet, the time devoted to them in each county, is far too short for that thorough preparation which young teachers require to fit themselves for one of the most responsible avocations.

I am happy to say, that every teacher in this town availed themselves of the opportunity to attend the Institute held last year.

T. BROOKINS, Shoreham.

Raising bounties to furnish volunteers for the army, has occupied the attention of this town for the past year, more than any other interest. But still I think the educational interest has not declined.

I think the present common school system is working admirably in this town. There is, however, great chance for improvement yet.

The districts are not particular enough in selecting their officers, and in careful looking for the comfort and interest of their scholars.

The Registers are doing their share of good, if well kept; which the Superintendents should earnestly request every teacher they license, to do faithfully and correctly.

I think the Teachers' Institutes of much benefit to our teachers, if they attend them, and I have urged the necessity of their attendance, by every teacher, or one who is intending to teach. The chief trouble seems to be, they are too far away from us.

My opinion of the recent enactment, terminating the practice of "boarding around," is, that it will work well if the districts sustain it as they should. I am unable to say how it is received by the town generally. Our town has not

yet received its copies of the school laws for 1864, and many are complaining that they do not understand the new law.

W. M. DAY, Starksboro.

Perhaps I cannot better express my views in this communication, than to send you some extracts from my Report, to the town for 1865, which is not printed.

"As results of my official visits to our schools, the past year, and of the observations made with a view to ascertain the actual progress made in them, I am happy to be able to report commendable progress in them all. Judging from the industry of the pupils generally, and the thoroughness and faithfulness of the teachers,—judging also from the order and discipline apparent in most of them, I cannot but be impressed with the belief, that they have been kept in good condition, and that substantial improvements, on the whole, have been made during the year. More attention, evidently, has been paid (certainly on the part of some of the teachers) of late, to reading and spelling, than formerly, and greater thoroughness has been manifested in the higher branches of common school education, such as Geography, Arithmetic and Grammar.

"I would call the attention of district committees to the importance of employing teachers in our schools, whose literary qualifications are of a *high order*, who have had experience in teaching, and whose manners and morals are such as have given them a reputation, that will any where commend them as worthy to be employed as teachers of our children.

"Of late, not only here, but elsewhere, as Superintendents' report, some who offer themselves as teachers seem reluctant to submit to a *public examination*.

"There are two other points, to which I beg leave to call the attention of the friends and patrons of the common schools. One is the importance of *attending* the public examinations of the teachers of their children; and the other, is the importance of frequently *visiting the schools*. There is a great deficiency in this town, in this respect, as will at once be obvious to any one who will inspect our School Registers, where the names of visitors are recorded."

SAMUEL W. COZZENS, Weybridge.

There seems to be a great degree of interest taken in the cause of education, in our town, and parents take a deeper interest in common schools; and I can say we are making progress towards a better state of things.

We have paid higher wages, and as a matter of course, have had better teachers, although our schools are smaller than at any time previous, since my connection with them.

The Teachers' Institutes are highly prized, and they have received a larger representation of teachers and friends, than at any previous year. I think the recent act, terminating the practice of boarding around, is received with great satisfaction, and is hailed with joy, by teachers generally. Some of the older members of the community would rather continue the old practice, yet we hope and trust they will be converted to this reform, by seeing the good results obtained by its practice.

W. H. CASEY, Whiting.

I send you below, my annual Report to the town. I have little of interest to add to that, except, perhaps, that the matter of a Graded School is now being discussed with us in this village, and there is a fair prospect of establishing such a school. We need it sadly.

The late law, terminating the old custom of boarding around, is well received with us, as far as my knowledge goes; the practice has not been general in our schools for several years. A few smaller districts retained it.

SCHOOL HOUSES. "Some of the school houses in town are in a bad condition; and very few in point of comfort and convenience, are really fit for the purpose they serve. In about half, there are no curtains or blinds, and the scholars must sit for hours with the sun pouring in its heat, or dazzling light, upon their heads. Would this be endured at home? In some, the seats are so high, that the little ones cannot touch their feet to the floor, and consequently some become tired and restless. In some there is not sufficient provision for ventilation; in others there is far too much of it. With the exception of a few outline maps, (some of which are badly torn and almost worthless,) the only apparatus our schools possess for illustrating studies, is the black-board; and in several instances the Superintendent found this useless, because there was no chalk for marking."

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS. "The instruction in our public schools is almost entirely elementary. Not more than ten per cent. of the scholars, in the average attendance, summer and winter, are over fourteen years of age. As a consequence, our public schools are little more than places for infant, or primary instruction. This, as a matter of course, detracts much from their interest,—induces Prudential Committees to hire young and inexperienced teachers, because, "almost anybody can teach such little things," and compels parents to send their children to private schools. If no such schools were accessible, our citizens must soon make some provision for more advanced scholars in the public schools, and thus raise them from the low standard to which they have fallen, or rather from which they never have risen. These private schools, many as there are, and poorly as they have hitherto been sustained, can never become permanent and first class institutions. They may have the best instructors, but there are inherent disadvantages in their system. One great one is, that they receive children of all ages, and youths of all grades of scholarship, coming together from different schools, and so diverse in attainment, cannot be classified to advantage; and much of the teacher's time is wasted with the multiplicity of classes. They have always proved short lived, and if a parent begins to send his children to one of them, there is no certainty that they can complete their education in the same school. The remedy for this is the establishment of "

PUBLIC UNION, OR GRADED SCHOOLS. "There is not a town in the State, of the size and wealth of Bennington, that does not have its public high schools, where older scholars may continue, under more favorable circumstances, the work begun in the district school. No private school can compare with these when properly conducted in efficiency, stability, and especially in the advantages which they afford to rich and poor alike. Two such schools, this town ought now to have,—one in the northern and one in the southern part. Such a school is especially needed in the largest village, in the town, where for years there has been no permanent provision of any sort—public or private, for scholars of this description. There are in this village, from two to three hundred youths, between the ages of twelve and twenty. Comparatively few of them attend the district school,—a few attend, with more or less regularity, the private schools, but the majority attend no where. Many of them cannot afford the cost of tuition at private schools, and will not go to the district schools because "none go there but A. B. C. scholars." So these youth are growing up to manhood and womanhood, with nothing but the slightest and rudest education. Now estimate the value of this class at a free high school, conducted after the manner of the high schools in Brattleboro, and the union school in Rutland. Estimate its influence upon the morality and intelligence of this place, ten years hence."

"The best way to establish such a school would doubtless be to abolish all district boundaries in the village, sell the present property in school houses, lots, &c., and erect a central building, large enough to accommodate all. Here, the child might learn its letters, and advance upward, urged and cheered on by the prospect of promotion, till he could leave the highest school, fitted for college,

or with a good business education. Such a course has been adopted successfully, in other towns in the state. Should this seem too costly an undertaking, (to those who are so short sighted, as not to see that it would be *cheapest* in the end) then the five districts in the village might associate to support a Union School of a higher grade. The school laws provide for such an arrangement. This would not necessitate the advancement of the present system of districts, nor their schools. These would continue as primary schools, and from these, scholars sufficiently advanced, would go to the Central Union School, to be supported by the five associate districts, and controlled by a board composed of one from the prudential committee in each district. This plan might not necessitate even the erection of a building, for the Union School, at first, if a suitable place could be found in which to hold it."

"It appears to me, from my observations upon the schools in this village, for years past, and a more or less extended acquaintance with the higher grade of public schools in Massachusetts, New York, and our own State, that such a school is eminently needed here; and that nothing but this will elevate our district schools throughout the town, and meet the wants of the people. By the munificence of two individuals, to whom the town must forever remain a debtor, a Free Public Library is about to be inaugurated, connected with other means of literary culture. Hand in hand with a Free Library, let there be a Free Public School, of a higher grade, as a co-laborer with it, for the intellectual and moral good of the community. The former cannot but be much more efficient through the latter. Together, they would constitute a power for good, to this town, not to be computed nor measured."

D. S. PHILLIPS, Bennington.

I think, upon the whole, the schools of this town have never been in better condition; nor have they ever made better progress than during the past year. But it should be borne in mind that these statements have reference to the schools as they now are, with their present numbers embracing in their average general attendance not much more than half the number of pupils who have a right to share in their benefits. It is a deplorable fact that there are many children properly entitled to the benefits of these schools, who are seldom or never found among their inmates. Add to this, that there are *very many more* who are sometimes found at the schools, but who are so grossly unsteady and irregular in their attendance, that they reap little or no benefit from their connection with them,—while they often retard their fellow pupils, and always disturb and derange the proper exercises of the school; and we shall discover that we have hit upon a matter connected with our educational system, which is worthy of our candid and earnest attention.

If the property of the State is to be taxed for the entire support of these schools, should there not be some effectual means adopted to secure the attendance of those for whose benefit the schools are established and maintained? I leave the subject for the consideration of those whom it concerns; but in doing so, let me ask, if there is anybody in the State of Vermont, whom it does not concern?

The law which terminates the practice of "boarding around" is received in this vicinity with general, though not with universal favor.

JOHN CURTIS, Dorset.

My report was made out in due season, but amid the rejoicings of the great and glorious victories, achieved by our noble and heroic armies during the past week, I have neglected to mail it to you within the time specified by law. I trust, however, the omission will be overlooked under the circumstances.

The recent enactment, terminating the practice of "boarding around," meets my hearty approval, and is much better received in this vicinity than I at first expected.

No man can estimate the good the present school system is working in Vermont. The people, getting at the facts better than ever before, through the admirable working of the system, more highly appreciate the great power of the common school to rule and govern society in a manner conducive to the best, the highest and noblest interests of humanity.

HARRISON PRINDLE, Manchester.

*** The practice here is to hire the teachers before examination. The committee is anxious to have the examination lowered down to the teachers, ability, instead of the teachers being subjected to a rigid examination. I think the examination should be before the teachers are employed. If committees and friends would attend these examinations, it would give them a character, much above what they now have; committees would be better able to judge of the person to employ. Superintendents could and would be more faithful in examining, and could withhold a certificate without giving offence to districts.

I have endeavored to examine teachers in the history of the United States, but find very few prepared to be examined in history, or know the leading facts in regard to the past of their own country. This is one of the branches they are required to be examined in; and should an applicant for a certificate, receive one, when ignorant of this branch? It seems to me, in a government like ours, the history of the past, and the form of government, should be taught in the people's colleges. I find some teachers are beginning to teach the geography and history of Vermont more thoroughly than has been done.

Attendance, as shown by the Registers, is not what it should be; upon an average one-third of the children are absent from school. Parents having children, claim that those who have none should help support the school, —rightfully claim it. Should not tax payers have the same right to claim that parents should send their children to the schools they are paying for.

The schools in this town have always been supported by the Grand List; the teachers board round by the Grand List.

I think the Institute held in town the past season had a good influence here and in adjoining towns—the teachers who gave the best attention carried the most of it into their schools. The teachers kept their registers correctly; made better returns than the prudential committees did. Some of the registers were not soiled or the corners turned down.

IRA M. BATCHELDER, Peru.

I have a pretty favorable report to make this year. Our teachers have been very successful in advancing the pupils under their care, not only in the branches studied, but in general deportment, love of school, and desire to excel as scholars. Patrons are perhaps no more inclined to visit school than heretofore, but I think they place greater confidence in teachers, and are willing to sustain them rather than to listen to children's complaints and flying reports; and thus indirectly withhold from teachers the support they have a right to expect. There is also more interest in the condition of school-houses. Improvements are going on which show more appreciation of the value of appropriate provision for the wants and pleasure of scholars. We have erected one new school-house within the past year, which reflects great credit upon those who were intrusted with its construction. It is in good taste, and unusually adapted to accomplish the purposes for which a school building is designed. There is progress also in other districts. Old, awkward, uncomfortable desks and seats are beginning to give place to those which are more appropriate in size and adaptation to the wants of scholars, and there is talk that it would be better to have

a little land with the school houses, which may be set with ornamental shade trees, and give a pleasant play-ground for the children.

I think teachers generally are pleased with the new law concerning board. I have heard little said by others. It is very important that the teacher's task should be made pleasant and desirable as affording the opportunity to do good, with the assurance that all parties with whom they are associated are helping them in the good work.

J. M. BACHELDOR, Pownal.

The schools in this town the present winter, (I have only had the supervision of them since Dec. last) have, for the most part, been conducted with ability and success. The respective Prudential Committees, with perhaps a single exception, have been judicious in the selection of teachers, employing only the best, and this is especially true of the female teachers. No instance of insubordination on the part of the scholars, or of undue severity on the part of the teachers, has come to my knowledge. This last fact is more gratifying, inasmuch as one district at least, has not heretofore enjoyed a very enviable reputation for its subjection to wholesome school discipline. There has, however, been little or no abatement of the wide spread and sore evil of *tardiness*. As an incipient means of relief, I have adopted the plan of inserting in terms of approbation, in my report to the town, the names of some *five* scholars, who present a clear record in this particular. I would with much deference recommend the general adoption of this plan. But little if any reliable information can be obtained from the answers to question No. 7, in the series of questions addressed to teachers, in relation to *dismissals* before the close of school, inasmuch as many teachers are in the habit of dismissing whole classes who have finished their recitations for the day, fifteen or twenty minutes before the school closes. Hence, one of our teachers who thus practices, answered the question by the word "*unlimited*." To elicit a correct answer, the question should be so framed as to ascertain the number dismissed before having finished their lessons, which no doubt is the *intention* of the question as it now stands.

In my judgment, the recent act of the Legislature, intended to terminate the practice of "boarding around," would have been a most beneficent enactment, had it only been so framed as to effect that desirable end; but we have in the Green Mountain fastnesses, a class of cute Yankees, who can drive four in hand through almost any Statute which affects their pockets. In at least one district in this town, they have sagely voted at their Annual Meeting just held, that "The teachers shall board around on the Grand List!" In another, they put her up at auction and ungallantly knocked her off to the lowest bidder. These are mere evasions of the Statute, and the object intended to be secured by it is so important that it ought, by all means, to be so amended or explained as to meet such cases.

JNO. CROKER, Readsboro.

In conformity with your request, made through the schedule, I would say that the school Registers of this town, their nature and importance, are better understood and hence better kept than formerly; affording the Superintendent the desired information, without labor or pains-taking. This information derived from these facts is certainly important and instructive; as showing the exact condition of the educational interests in the town.

I notice from the registers that there has been during the year 81 weeks of school kept by males, for which they received \$478, or about \$6 per week; also that there has been 180 weeks of school taught by females, for which they received \$481, or about \$2.66 per week! I would inquire *why* this difference? If the lady teaches as good a school as the gentleman, (and that she *does*, it needs no argument to prove,) why is she not entitled to the same pay? Certainly

society is at fault in this respect. I also notice from the Registers that there are 2611 cases of tardiness!—on an average in town, ten tardy marks to a scholar! Now if parents were only aware of the *infinite* importance of habits of promptness and punctuality, this could never be. Parents should remember that the character of their children is in its *formation* state. Hence, whatever habits they form, whether good or ill, virtuous or vicious, they must ever remain. Should they have little duties to perform, see to it that they are up in the morning, duties performed, and that they are off to school in season. This will cost the parents little, and be of great advantage to the child.

I think that Teachers Institutes are exerting a highly salutary influence upon the teachers of the State, and the community in which they are held; and further, that they should be supported by appropriation of the Legislature, and by the common consent and common efforts of all.

The practice of "boarding around," upon which you solicit remarks, is one concerning which I know something by experience, having taught school more or less for ten years. And I tell you, Mr. Secretary, that this going about from place to place, answering a thousand and one foolish questions, in regard to your age, the number of your brothers and sisters, how old your grandmother was at her death, and what is still worse, warming everybody's bed but your own, is neither pleasant to the itinerant, nor profitable to the community for which one labors. The teacher should be constantly studying, laboring, thinking for the benefit of his pupils, and how can this be, under such circumstances? I am happy to state that in this regard, the enactments of the Legislature are received with a very good grace by the people of this town. It is certainly the right step in the right direction, and we may reasonably expect a brighter and more auspicious era of freedom and enduring, concord, of intelligence, happiness and peace.

J. N. WISEMAN, Rupert

Happily, for the interests of the schools in this town, we own a team, for did we have to hire conveyance the pay of the Town Superintendent is so small that the schools would have been unvisited; but, we hope, good has been done, which is not to be estimated by dollars and cents.

One object in visiting the schools has been to ascertain the advancement of the pupils, the order and discipline, and the *methods* of teaching. Generally the order and discipline has been good; and some of the teachers seemed to have a good degree of *invention*, originating *novel* and practical methods of awakening interest in the studies pursued, thus making study a pleasure,—at least they have taken away much of the tediousness of routine.

We saw an instance of this kind, in a school in this town, where the teacher succeeded in interesting a class of "A. B. C. Dariari's" in this way. The school-room had a good black-board on which the teacher had printed in Roman characters, both the capital and also the small letters: these the *smaller* children had learned, in a few days. The teacher held up her *pen knife* asking them, "What is this?" Ans. "A knife." "Can you spell knife?" The little ones hesitated, the teacher stepped to the black-board, and *pointed the word "knife"* on the board, the capitals and also in small letters. The animated countenances showed that they were deeply interested; then followed a short but thorough lesson in "Object-teaching," the knife furnishing the topic—using the words "iron," "blade," "pearl," "sharp," "trap," &c., &c. And this is the only instance, where the teacher calls to his aid "objects" for instruction; indeed, in this town, there is only occasional use of the Black-board, and then only for the purpose of "doing a sum" for a class; and in some of the schools there is not a good Black-board, and one school has nothing of the kind. We believe "Object-Teaching" should be made available as a help, especially to *exctt* inquiry. And then every school should be supplied with a box of carefully selected objects;

and if it is done at all, it must be done by State appropriations. *Money could not be better used.* Some of our schools have been adopting improved methods of imparting instruction; and we have had excellent reading and spelling; also recitations in Arithmetic, Geography, Algebra, Geometry and Latin; but too many cling to the useless and antiquated methods of reading, spelling, &c., &c. At our meetings for the examination of Teachers, we always ascertain the existing methods of teaching, and then try to impress upon the teachers the importance of *better* systems; but most of them still keep on in the old and pernicious ways. The *great* need, in our opinion, is *frequent* teachers meetings to be held in every town once in every month, and legislation to compel attendance. We can hardly *over-estimate* the practical value of Teachers Institutes. Only three female teachers attended the Institute held last year at Peru; one engaged in teaching in this town, and she adopted some of the suggestions there given, *much* to the *advantage* of the school. But the Institutes are not *frequent* enough, to produce any rapid reform. The mere *nominal* pay of Teachers is a heavy drag upon our schools; When we are willing to pay a fair, —nay, a *good* salary to teachers, then we can get the *best*, and a *few* of the people are beginning to feel it, and we hope the “little leaven may leaven the whole lump.”

In answer to your inquiry as to the termination of “boarding around” we will say, that as far as we have heard any expression on that subject, it *meets with entire approbation*. We make it a rule, from which we do not deviate, to examine carefully the school Registers and see if they are kept according to instructions.

PHILANDER PERRY, Shaftsbury.

* * * In relation to the recent enactment terminating the practice of “boarding around,” I think it a wise and judicious enactment; and as far as I have the means of knowing, the people consider it a God-send.

ADNA NEWTON, Winhall.

* * * The act that was passed at the last session of our Legislature made some squirming in the District where I live, but they finally thought best to abide by it; the other Districts raised their money as before, and of course they were suited with it. I have advocated this law for years, but have met with decided opposition in my District. And now I will advance a step further; if we cannot get all the children into the Common Schools, who have been kept out by reason of board and fuel, let the Committee furnish such children books and charge the District, and see that they do attend the school. I do not wish to make this an act of the Legislature, unless what is now done fails of the desired effect; but I want all the children in the State to attend the Common Schools.

STEPHEN GLEASON, Woodford.

Having been engaged in teaching for a number of years past, in the neighboring Province, I feel that I can somewhat appreciate our own excellent common school system. An understanding of any law, a system, is first necessary, and then by bringing it into practical working we see its effect, become interested, and realize its blessings. This is all that is needed in regard to our school system, but, I must confess, that we are yet a little backward, perhaps not more so than in other small towns; there is not that importance attached to our school law; the office of superintendent, the school meeting, the selection of teachers, visiting schools, &c.—that they each and all demand. But notwithstanding this indifference, we are progressing. Our schools during the past year have been very successful, we have excellent teachers in town, and others of less experience all preparing to advance our school interest more rapidly; our schools are mostly taught by females, and the

practice has been with few exceptions to board around. All teachers rejoice at the prospect of having a steady home, but it will take a short time to do away with the old practice. I find the register invariably an index to the general character of the school; it is a great critic, all good teachers take pride in keeping it, while poor ones hate it. We need only to attend the Teacher's Institutes to appreciate their importance,—small towns are not generally much benefited by them,

C. D. HALL, Burke.

I think very much of the recent enactment, &c., and the people do here, so far as my knowledge extends.

JOHN EASTMAN, Danville.

During the last year our schools have been marked with that success which usually attends the efforts of teachers of experience, coupled with the efforts of all friends of education here, or elsewhere.

In the past year's experience as Superintendent, I find much to praise and much to censure. I have found the teachers well qualified to teach, and the schools and scholars making good improvements; but I regret to say, that many of our school houses are unworthy of the name, and on remarking their unsuitableness, I receive the excuse that these are war times, and will have better bye and bye. I regret that none of the districts are furnished with Dictionaries, Globes, Maps, &c., which would be of great service to the schools in acquiring an education.

I find many cases of truancy, which fault I attribute as much to the parents as to the scholars. Parents ought to see that their children are at school every day, and in season, if possible. I think the law permitting the board and fuel to be raised on the Grand List a good one, and although up to this date our teachers have boarded around, this spring the district have voted to defray all the expenses of the schools on the Grand List, and have the teachers board in one place; which I think will prove beneficial to all concerned. I think the School Registers of great importance, and that their acquirements should be fully carried out.

A. M. HEATH, Groton.

I have been led to think, that, to just perform the duties of Superintendent that are required by law, amounts comparatively to nothing; but when one puts his shoulder to the wheel, and with active labor, in connection with teachers, parents and scholars, he can improve the school under his charge, and it is then, that he fulfils the real object of his appointment.

I believe the utility of our schools can be improved by an active Superintendent. He should hold public exercises—have discussions—have the people come out oftener to talk and think about their schools—have practical Institutes, and oftener too than Sec'y Adams can hold them; and thus I think the progress in our Public Schools can be made overwhelming.

In every particular, the schools of this town have improved the past year, the teachers are better—less dismissals—better attendance—less tardiness—more interest on the part of parents, and more attention given to schools from the public generally than heretofore; and it is the result I believe of the following enterprise that I can thus report, and in so doing, we think in an educational way, that we have struck "the nail." If Superintendents would be compensated to institute and superintend exercises like the following, and by law be made a part of their labors, I believe they would be made ten fold as beneficial to those they serve as they now are.

Early in the past winter, I advised with the teachers in town, and they very readily fell in with the plan, to hold public evening schools through the winter, for the purpose of improving the methods of teaching, and exciting a more general interest. The plan was, to gather one-half of the schools at South Hardwick, and the other half at East Hardwick, alternately, every two weeks during the winter.

This plan was carried out, and I think it will be admitted that it was really a success.

The exercises were composed each evening of one recitation from each school, so that each branch of study pursued in the day schools was repeated each evening; also three or four essays from as many teachers, on subjects connected with governing or teaching schools, and declamations from the little boys and girls serving as copies; thus making a programme of exercises very interesting indeed.

This placed a direct stimulus before each school and each teacher, serving to bring out an effort that was in many cases surprising. It was intended to have these recitations "model recitations," and thus give one teacher the advantage of another's experience and good qualities. This made the exercises then practically Teacher's Institutes. The special idea was to promote improvement in teaching each branch of study—and there was eminent success in reference to all branches—Grammar and Geography in particular.

There was one other object gained. It stirred up the parents; and very many of them have taken more interest in their schools than they otherwise would, and thus a corresponding improvement has been made in them. I venture to say, that our schools here improved 25 per cent, as the effect of this enterprise.

I think the recent enactment, terminating the practice of boarding around, has done a very good thing for the State. Its reception here is such that very many more teachers board in one place and have a permanent home. School Registers, Teacher's Institutes, Annual Reports, &c., are all doing their good work in our town.

ANDREW J. HYDE, Hardwick.

I think there has been an average degree of success in the schools of this town. The teachers shows a greater deficiency in government, than in any other qualification; though I do not suppose that is peculiar to our town alone. A good share of the teachers have had some experience in teaching before, but few I think, have ever had any normal instructions, and are fitted only by their good sense and experience, together with a good degree of book knowledge for their occupation.

Whatever will tend to increase the diffusion of that important theoretical knowledge, in the art of giving instruction, and of keeping good order, among the teachers and those designing to teach, will have a practical benefit upon our common school system. When teachers make thoroughness in every department their chief object, and not speed in turning over book leaves, the labor and expense of our schools will meet with a much greater remuneration. Some seem to forget that good morals is one of the branches of a common school education, and therefore neglect that part too much. Although it cannot be expected that moral Philosophy is going to be introduced into our schools as a text book, it *should* be expected that moral instruction will not be omitted altogether.

RUSSELL RISLEY, Jr., Kirby.

* * * In my own town, I must confess there is but *little* of what I call *good* teaching. From the nature of the case it must be so. The schools are *small*, and cannot command the service of competent teachers. Yet it is not to be doubted that any one, who can go through the routine, too generally satisfies the people. The great failure of teachers, according to my view, is lack of *energy* and *thoroughness*. It is easier to float down the stream, than to stem the current, and generally it is done. We cannot sufficiently realize the fact, that nothing great or good is accomplished in this life without self-denial and effort.

With regard to the mode of recitations which prevails, I take most exception to spelling. The class comes out on the floor, and if they spell and give the definitions, it passes off; and if they cannot, it is about as well. Where spelling is thus conducted there is no stimulus, and hence but little interest. The only antidote for this, as I conceive, is an appeal to the scholar's pride; while we are all naturally lazy

and will get through the world as easy as we can, we are at the same time proud, and for the sake of that, will do what otherwise we would not be very apt to. In spelling then, let the scholars take their places, no scholar is delighted to step down, to let another step above him; pride will counterbalance laziness. So long as the practice of which I disapprove continues, we shall not have good spellers. When the lesson is recited, questions should be put to the scholars individually, and not to the class collectively.

G. M. WILEY, Ryegate.

The schools in this town have been quite as prosperous during the past year, as the one preceding. It is an encouraging thought to know, that while our country is passing through the new and strange experience of war, the interests of education, the sure basis of our glorious institutions, and a free government, have not been neglected, nor has the interests of our common schools been lessened. The teachers, most of them, have been faithful, and have manifested a commendable zeal in their work. The schools with these exceptions have been prosperous. The Registers are kept with greater care, and fewer mistakes than before, which fact shows that their influence is working good. Some of our schools have received increased attention from parents and prudential committees, which is I think an omen of better days coming. Still there is a broad field yet open for improvement. Parents and Prudential Committees must awake to the importance of their duties; there is not a teacher, however well qualified she may be, that can maintain good government in school without the co-operation of the parents. They ought not to speak disparagingly of their teachers in the presence of their children; they put it out of the power of the teachers to benefit them, if they do. How often is it the case, that a child gets corrected at school, and goes home with a bitter complaint to its parents, who sympathize with it and censure the teachers. They should never listen to their child when complaining of its teacher; if they do, the best of teachers will fail of keeping a good school; better by far, they should suffer a little injustice, than be spoiled by false sympathy and encouraged in resisting the authority of their teacher. Parents ought to see that their children are at school in season; it is very annoying to the teacher, besides being an injury to themselves and the school to have them coming in after the school has commenced. They had better submit to a little sacrifice than to have them late or absent. And last, though not least, they should often visit the school-room, not to censure and find fault as some do, but to encourage both teacher and scholars, for by so doing, surely they shall not lose their reward.

* * * Teacher's Institutes have been productive of highly beneficial results. A more liberal expenditure in this direction, would I believe be a good investment. Registers and Annual Reports are indispensable. The enactment terminating the practice of boarding around is received with universal delight, it should receive praise from every town.

U. S. PEACH, Sheffield.

Sir you ask my opinion in regard to the late enactment in relation to teachers boarding around, and how it is received in this vicinity. I think it has the approval of the citizens generally; though some that have money and no scholars, think it quite hard to support a school entirely on the Grand List. In regard to school registers, teachers have generally done their duty; but district clerks are quite too negligent in filling and returning them to the town clerk's office in season for the annual report of the town superintendent. I hope some plan may be adopted that will remedy this evil.

J. M. PILLSBURY, Sutton.

I am convinced that under the present school system, our schools are making decided improvements from one year to another, and that a higher standard of ex-

cellence is attained. The past year the schools in this town have all been taught by females and we have suffered no loss by the change. With the exception of two terms we have had excellent schools, and some of them, the best I ever visited. Teachers who have attended the Institutes possess a faculty to create an interest in their schools which is highly beneficial. The Institutes could not well be dispensed with.

The recent enactment terminating the practice of boarding around, is well received by teachers and the special friends of Education, and will be acquiesced in by all others. Finally, if all persons having duties to perform relative to the present school system, will perform them faithfully, good results are sure to follow.

F. R. CHAMBERLAIN, Walden.

I am obliged to say that the inhabitants of this town are wilfully prejudiced against the school law in every particular. They, to a great extent, believe that all time and money spent as the law directs, is thrown away. It is the general impression that the Registers occupy the teacher's time and yield no fruit, that Superintendents are a failure, and it is thought that a report of the town *treating upon facts* is very ungentlemanly and impolite.

In my opinion there was great need of some law of the nature, and that the present law is as faultless as possible. It is a benefit to our children, while our citizens disown it. Among our teachers and scholars I can see its glowing effect. Teachers compete with teachers, and pupils with pupils, to transmit a clean record. The Teachers' Institutes also have an improving influence among our instructors, they not only give valuable information by means of them, but are determined to make a more resolute strike for perfect success.

I do not understand by the recent law that Districts are obliged to board their teachers at one place, which should have been the great object aimed at. I believe it to be a practice improper as well as unprofitable.

EDWIN S. HOVEY, Waterford.

There seems to be a great lack of interest on the part of Prudential Committees and parents. Committees engage the teacher, and aside from that, take very little interest, visiting the schools rarely. Parents visit the schools only in few cases. I think the practice of boarding around a very bad one, and it is not quite finished, for some districts let the teacher board around on the Grand List.

WILLIAM HART, Wheelock.

The answers to the questions in this report, are not reliable, but are given as correctly as I am able to give them from the material I have before me.

Owing to the neglect of the district clerks, there are but three complete returns. The questions to be answered by teachers are more correct, sufficiently so for particular purposes. But five districts have supported schools in town the past year, the others being too feeble to support one, but at the last March meeting, measures were taken to unite some of them, thus making them stronger; this year we have two more in operation.

In visiting schools, I have endeavored to stimulate the parents to take a deeper interest in common schools. First, to employ good teachers, and keep them while they give good satisfaction. A teacher having once learned the disposition of his scholars, is more profitable than a stranger every few months. Second, provide a comfortable school house, with books, &c., and see that the children are there, when school begins in the morning, and when it is dismissed, *every day*.

I can say there is progress in our schools, though perhaps too slow, and a greater appreciation of the worth of good schools. The recent act of the Legislature ex-

minating the practice of boarding around, is another step in the advancement of Education, and is quite favorably received in this vicinity.

I shall this year look after the district clerks, that they do their duty as well as the teachers, that the statistical returns may be full and correct.

HERMAN HALL, Bolton.

In forwarding this my Annual Report, I am happy to say, that our schools, the past year, would compare favorably I think with those of former years. In some of them, there has been decided improvement.

The increased interest in the schools, manifested by parents, as indicated by the record of visits in some of the Registers, is a very favorable indication.

In one district, the teacher informed me that *all the inhabitants* of the district had visited her school—some of them repeatedly. This is as it should be; that school was one of the best in town, and I have no doubt that the interest manifested in it by parents and others, had an important influence in making it so. The same results would be witnessed in other districts, if a similar interest were felt and manifested. No amount of legislation—no efforts of Boards of Education, or Superintendents, or Committees, can elevate our schools, and make them efficient and successful, when parents and others who should feel the deepest interest in them, treat them with indifference and neglect.

Our Registers are badly kept, especially the district clerks' department; some have taken no pains to answer correctly the questions addressed to them. I think however they should not be dispensed with, as they are the means of receiving statistics, which could not otherwise be obtained.

The Institute held here, though poorly attended, was the means of increasing materially an interest in the subject of common school education. So far as I know, our people approve the enactment respecting "boarding around."

C. M. SEATON, Charlotte.

The friends of education in this town are heartily in favor of the recent enactment terminating the practice of "boarding around." The people generally accept it as a wise measure.

In my opinion the next thing that deserves the attention of our Legislature in regard to the public schools, is the adoption of some plan by which a certain sum of money be distributed, each year, to the several school districts for the purpose of supplying a District Library.

The influence of even a few standard books, such as Dictionaries, Treatises on School-Architecture, and books of practical value, could hardly be over-estimated.

J. D. KINGSBURY, Colchester.

The recent action of the Legislature, placing the whole expense of school upon the Grand List, meets my hearty approval. It is a thing which I have long desired, feeling that a cause which was so intimately connected with the welfare of our State and Country as that of popular Education, should receive its full support from the public treasury. Another reason why I have desired it, is that all, poor as well as rich, may enjoy advantages whereby the powers of the immortal mind may become developed. How many there may be, who under the influences of "few schools" will acquire that thirst for knowledge, which will increase and make them useful members in society, and "lights" in the world, who otherwise would remain in ignorance; we never can know, we trust they will be many. This law is well received by the better informed part of our community. Judging from the feeling of those districts that have adopted its principles within themselves for the past three or four years, I think it will become popular, a matter of a year or two.

The Annual Reports of the Secretary are doing a good work. I wish they might be more extensively circulated and read. I notice that those who read them are better posted in school matters than others; they feel the necessity of more enter-

prise in everything relating to the welfare of our schools ; and are willing to adopt a more liberal policy in sustaining them. In connection with these reports, the school registers are indispensable, furnishing for them as they do, the greater part of the statistical information. They are also almost a necessity in any well regulated school. No good teacher would be satisfied without collecting from their field of labors, certainly as many or more parts as are contemplated by the blanks of the registers furnished them. My teachers for the past two or three years have all (with one exception) carefully and intelligibly performed their duty in this respect. I wish I could say the same of the district clerks; we have several in this town who are negligent in the matter, and some who I think are wilfully so. If our selectmen would perform their duty faithfully to such, by withholding from their districts their public money, it might bring them to their senses.

In connection with the report of the Secretary allow me a word respecting the reports of the Superintendents. It seems to me that the law should require that they should be printed and distributed through the towns. By so doing, a better and more efficient class of Superintendents would be elected.

Teachers also knowing that their acts would be published and open to the scrutiny of the public, would feel the responsibilities of their station more, and would be more likely to perform its duties well. I have long felt the importance of this matter, but being one of "the Superintendents" I have forbore hitherto to mention it. As I am now free in this respect I take the opportunity to bring the matter before you.

The manner in which the public money is distributed, has I think worked a great evil in some of our districts. There being so great a portion of it divided in proportion to the *average* attendance, the tendency is to shorten the terms of the schools, in those districts where pernicious and niggardly counsels prevail ; as all know that a short term of school will average more scholars than a longer one. It would seem to be policy at least to divide enough of it in proportion to the aggregate attendance to offer an inducement to the several districts, to lengthen the terms of their schools as much as possible. Furthermore, would it not be right, would it be more than justice for those districts that are enterprising and sustain a school during nine or ten months in the year, to receive *more* public money than those districts which have only five or six months, instead of less, as they do now under the existing law?

D. H. MACOMBER, Essex,

I think the present law, providing that the whole expenses of the schools shall be supported by general tax, is as it should be. Now at last our schools will be, what we have heretofore falsely called them, *free schools*.

Although our tax payers have generally taken advantage of the privilege the law has given them, to vote wood, or board, or both to be paid on the scholar ; and in some districts there has been at every school meeting a contest on the question ; yet I have heard little or no fault found with the action of the last Legislature in taking this privilege. I think there is general acquiescence in it as right.

C. E. FERRIN, Hinesburgh.

The interest in the subject of education is progressing steadily in Jericho. Teachers' Institutes awaken a great interest. I think they cannot be prized too highly.

Some few grumble because the wood and board is on the Grand List, but it is where it should be.

A. F. CHAPIN, Jericho.

Teachers board around as before, only changed from scholar to Grand List.

ROBT J. WHITE, Shelburne.

In my opinion, the recent enactment terminating the practice of "boarding around" will be instrumental in doing a vast amount of good, provided it can be sustained by future Legislation. To my certain knowledge we have lost many good teachers in this town because a vote could not be obtained to give them a steady boarding place.

A majority of the voters of this town are opposed to the act, (I judge from the fact that by vote, the expenses of board and fuel, almost universally have been paid, by a tax on the scholar) and some say it will soon be repealed. In one district a majority of voters—being tax payers without children of school age—adjourned the annual meeting without electing officers, or doing any other business. If Legislation is necessary to keep us all in the traces, let us have it. Perhaps a tax on the general List of the town to support all the schools therein indiscriminately, would be advisable.

J. H. MACOMBER, Westford.

The following is from my report to the Town meeting. Several of our summer schools failed of the highest success, if they attained to ordinary, not from any positive fault or disqualification of their teacher, but from their youth and inexperience. In my notes of visitation, I have marked them, as of this character. This defect can and should be remedied or provided against in future, by employing teachers of riper years and larger experience.

The winter schools were taught by older and more experienced teachers, and were more successful. Of the nine kept through the winter, and visited, I have marked six where the instructions was thorough, and the whole management truly commendable, while some fell below the ordinary. On the whole, the schools in town for the last year have been commendable.

One neat and commodious school-house has been built during the past year.

There has been a marked improvement in both teachers and district clerks in keeping the Registers, the teachers surpassing the clerks in this particular.

The meeting of the County Teacher's Association here in Jan. last, was largely attended, well conducted, and decidedly beautiful, — more so than previous meetings of the same kind at this place.

Recent enactments secure my hearty approval; I believe they also do, of the best informed of our districts generally. The experience of one district especially, that has for two years past supported its school by tax on the Grand List, is worthy of recital. The average attendance has so increased, and consequently the amount of public money received, that the school is cheaper, even to those who have to pay for the school, than before.

As seven of our twelve districts have for the year past offered their teachers steady boarding places, even before the recent enactment touching this subject, I think the act "terminating the practice of boarding around" is favored by the majority. Also that pertaining to the removal or change of persons from one district to another.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

A. D. BARBER, Williston.

The schools in this town the past year were not quite as prosperous and useful as in the year preceding.

This town has ever paid the highest bounties for recruits into the army, and last year paid \$1000 per man, for one year. The heavy taxes thereby induced—as the town has kept out of debt—had the effect to abbreviate the terms of the schools, in some of the districts, and also to cause a poor economy in selecting teachers. The natural results followed—children removed from schools—irregularity of attendance increased—and general listlessness in school, and want of interest throughout.

It is wise to profit by experience, more especially by costly experience. We are liable to theorize fallaciously; but dear bought experience seldom fails to point out a wise course. The lesson taught by employing teachers mostly because they can

be had for a small compensation is, that, small as the pittance they receive, it is more than their services are worth; in a word, that *cheap* schools are generally the *dearest*, because the most *worthless*; and if worthless, then pernicious. It would seem that little experience were needed to teach this; and yet often multiplied instances fail to properly impress Prudential Committees and others who are influenced in the selection of teachers!

Just one determination is necessary in every district, to wit: to have a *good* school, or none; for a poor school is worse than none. Do not reason and experience teach this?

The first Teachers' Institute, ever held in this place, or in this part of the country, was held here on the 26th and 27th of last Dec., by the Secretary of the Board of Education, and I may safely say, that an occasion of greater interest was never enjoyed by those who were so fortunate as to attend.

It being denominated a Teachers' Institute, it was not generally supposed it would possess much interest for others; and hence, although the Superintendent did what he could, to insure a general turnout, the attendance was not what it would have been, had its character been rightly appreciated; certainly not what it will be, when we are favored by another.

"A little leaven, leavens the whole lump," and the deep and thrilling impression produced on the minds of those who attended, has already spread, until the whole vicinity is clamorous for the Secretary to come again! Often have I been spoken to, of late, to express in my report, our peoples' sense of the great value of the Teachers' Institutes; and I can truly say, for myself, that I regard it as one of the most potent agencies now employed in behalf of our schools.

You ask—"What is your opinion of the enactment terminating the practice of 'boarding around,' and 'how is it received in your vicinity?'" I think it will prove a salutary enactment, and believe such to be the general opinion. Indeed, I have heard no man find fault with it, but have heard many commend it. The practice has generally been in this town, for the teacher to "board around," and on the scholar as it is termed, which tended to throw an unequal share of the burden of supporting schools on poor people with large families. And the result was that in some instances, the children of the poor were virtually driven from the schools. But I think the districts will willingly accommodate themselves to the new order of things.

GEORGE W. HARTSHORN, Canaan.

* * * Relative to the recent law, placing the board upon the Grand List; my opinion is, that it places it where it ought to be, that the property ought to support the schools.

I think the schools in this town for the past year, taken as a whole, are an improvement on last year. One serious trouble with our schools, this way, is, that if Mr. A. happens to be chosen Prudential Committee, Mr. B. does not like it, thinks he ought to have had this important distinction conferred on him; and says, ubliely that Mr. A. is not fit for the office, or that he will not hire a suitable teacher, or else will pay too high wages; and from these points spring up a predetermined dislike to the teacher; and whatever the teacher may do or not do, Mr. B. is dissatisfied with the school, and all because Mr. A. is committee, and all of this talk before the scholars of the district, too. When the time comes, in which all persons are willing to extend every help in their power to the teacher; rendering their cordial co-operation in every effort for the good of the school; then may we hope to see such results flow from them as shall give the assurance that a full return is received for the money expended.

Order is the one thing most lacking upon the part of our teachers, and is so acknowledged by all; at the same time, it is *your* children, not *mine*, that need correcting, and upon this point, I think there is more blame to be attached to parents

than children, as the feeling, if not expression, is, *you must not correct my children, my darlings never do wrong!*

ALLEN R. BOYCE, Granby.

There seems to be a great failure on the part of Prudential Committees in the choice of female teachers for summer schools. Many of our schools are presided over during the summer months by young girls. There must be a commencement in the *art*, but no person, male or female, can be qualified to preside over a tumultuous group of urchins, full of fun and mischief, until they have at least learned the art of controlling their own exuberant spirits.

The error grows less from day to day, and we no longer look in vain for experienced teachers.

The schools in this town for a year past have steadily improved. Books all uniform; a much better grade of teachers; and the practice of "boarding around" fast becoming obsolete; and may hope for a more improved state of things in our common schools.

B. W. DODGE, Guildhall.

Not so much progress has been made in our schools the past year, as I had reason to expect at the commencement of the year.

Some of the teachers were young and inexperienced, and their schools have been partial failures in consequence. Prudential Committees should be more careful in the selection of teachers, and instead of hiring the first person they chance to meet that would teach the school for the wages they intended to pay, they should try to procure able and experienced teachers, for scholars in general will learn more in one month under the management of a good teacher, than they would in three months under a poor one. There is not interest enough manifested on the part of parents in the success and progress of our schools. They should visit the schools oftener, furnish more and better books for their children, and in fact do all in their power for the progress of education in their locality. The school Registers have been tolerably well kept, the past year; though some of the district clerks have been a little negligent in answering the statistical inquiries addressed to them; they have, however, done better in this respect this year than formerly.

I think the present system of school Registers necessary to the advancement of our schools.

Teachers' Institutes, also, are of great benefit to education.

There is a great difference of opinion in regard to the law, terminating the practice of "boarding around." Some argue that parents who send children to school, ought to be acquainted with the teacher,—which cannot be so well done, if she boards only at one place, and also that they, whose children are benefited by the school, should bear a little *more* than their share of the expenses of the school. Others in support of the new law, think it much more comfortable and convenient for the teachers to board in one place; and that the fairest way is to defray the expenses of our schools by taxes upon the Grand List.

I think, if the new law has a fair trial, it will not be repealed, at least at present.

A. J. HOLBROOK, Lemington.

You ask my opinion "of the recent enactment terminating the practice of boarding around." It does not affect us in the least! Every one thinks the law just, and may wish it extended so as to *prohibit* boarding around. The practice has been with us for some time past, to "board the teacher about on the Grand List." In some districts the board is "sold to the lowest bidder," and each one could choose to board, or pay as they preferred. We have been so *very humane*

for several years, as to send the teachers about for their living, but not to send them among the poor. It is a curious fact that men had rather spare a little provision, than a little money.

The next step will be to prohibit it altogether. I have held the office of Superintendent for ten years; this year I have declined further service, and a worthy man, an old teacher, has been chosen.

From my own observation, I know that the schools for the past six years have greatly improved, not only here, but throughout the State; have cultivated a healthy public sentiment on the subject of common school education, that the State will never lose. May Heaven smile on you and all engaged in this good work.

CHAS. W. KING, Lunenburg.

The schools of this town, I think, are improving. Although the improvement is not what I desired, it is more than I expected, and this is due to the labors of our teachers; they take hold with more zeal than formerly. This increased zeal of the teachers is due mostly, if not entirely, to the Teachers' Institutes. * * *

JOHN R. LEE, Victory.

The schools in this town are as good as could be expected in such school-houses. The majority of the school-houses are horrible, yet there is manifested on the part of teachers, scholars and patrons, a patience in the endurance of the evils arising from this cause, that is really remarkable, and would be commendable, were it regarding evils purely providential.

The enactment terminating the practice of "boarding around" is hailed by the teachers and timid house-wives with joy. Some of the heavy tax-payers, who do not realize how much a good common school system enhances the value of their property, or who do not care much for the welfare of future generations, grumble.

Many in our town are ruining its educational interests by giving vent to the spite of local feeling. We have a flourishing and pleasant village, in which a graded school of the first quality might, and should be maintained. Instead of this, we have within a distance of a little over half a mile, three ill-constructed little school-houses, each of them set as near the road as possible, with no play grounds at all.

I wish, Mr. Secretary, you would as soon as possible hold a Teachers' Institute here. When you behold our situation, I think your mind will be stirred within you, to urge the passage of a law which shall not leave the establishment of graded schools to the caprice of local animosities and interests.

GEO. F. WRIGHT, Bakersfield.

As a whole, our schools are much improved during the last four or five years. The recent change in favor of female teachers, although almost necessitated by circumstances, such as high wages, and absolute scarcity of male teachers, results in furnishing a much better class of teachers at much less expense. The new change abolishing the "boarding around" practice will, I think, be generally received with favor, and is much better for schools and teachers.

Our teachers generally keep the Registers in a correct and orderly manner, but our district clerks exhibit very great carelessness in their answers. How can it be remedied? Thus, in my present report, carefully taken from the Registers, I am made to say, that there is in town 482 children, between 4 and 18 years of age, and that 491 attend school, between the same ages: other discrepancies occur equally absurd. Verily there is much to be done by way of making parents, school committees, district clerks, &c., believe that *a labor belongs to them to perform*, and that a responsibility rests upon them, if they would have the condition of our common schools what it ought to be.

O. F. FASSETT, Berkshire.

* * * I suggested to our selectmen, this year, that they withhold the public money from those districts which neglect to return their Registers according to law, for we fail in the important object of keeping Registers, unless we can have the precise figures in relation to Schools. I have spent nearly forty days in the interest of our fifteen schools, the year past, and although the pecuniary compensation is small, I have the satisfaction of seeing most of our schools making an obvious improvement, both in the method of teaching, and in the deeper interest manifested by the scholars in their studies.

PETER CHASE, Enosburg.

* * * * There is considerable complaint among the people that the Registers make too much trouble, and it is quite evident from the imperfections found in them, that too many fail to understand them; yet I can discover nothing in them dark or incomprehensible. We have not, since the war commenced, made much improvement in school-houses, for the reason that we have been too abominably afflicted with such exorbitant town bounties. However, I trust the time is at hand, when our Country will be blessed with peace: then may we hope that our schools will be attended to in earnest. The Teachers' Institute is an institution not to be neglected, I hope. The Annual Report is our only source of information with regard to the schools. It is possible that more brevity on the part of the Secretary would be commendable.

WARREN ROBINSON, Highgate.

My report is as near correct as I can make it, with the very slack reports of District clerks and teachers. I find a great deficiency in this respect, and would that it might in some way be remedied, as I believe under the present school system, our school will be much benefited, if closely adhered to. The School Registers especially, I believe to be a great improvement.

In relation to the termination of the practice of "boarding around" I think it an other step in the right direction; and the people, although contrary to wishes, at first, are beginning to feel somewhat reconciled, and it will soon be with them all right.

J. H. HAMILTON, Richford.

In regard to the enactment terminating "boarding around", I have only to say, for myself, that I look upon it as something that ought to have been done long ago, and I have heard no particular grumbling about it in our vicinity, though I presume there has been, as there always are, some to hang back and find fault, when any such step of real progress is taken, particularly if likely to draw a little heavier by way of expense.

The chief improvement of particular account in connection with our schools for the past year, is the union of the two village districts, with a view to grafting the schools. Of course as yet the good to result from such a course is but little seen, and yet is beginning to be seen and acknowledged in the superior character which the schools have already taken, and in the awakened interest in the community generally in regard to them. I have much of hope also for the general good influence which will be exerted upon the schools in town, if one graded school in the village can be brought and kept successfully in operation. And for this good result in the present, and hope for the future in regard to the condition of schools among us, we are indebted to the Teachers' Institute held here last December.

Of course a Graded School is not an immediate panacea for all the evils that afflict us in the way of Education; not unfrequently, anticipations of what it is to do for ourselves or our children are altogether too high, especially when, as is not seldom the case, the anticipations are indulged, with at the same time scarce a thought that here, as every where else in this world, where any thing of importance is accomplished, success is only to be reached at the expense of much careful and pains-

taking effort and labor; and that even then, there will almost unavoidably be more or less of occasional and temporary failure. But in the great excellence of the Graded-School *law or system*, I have the fullest confidence; and of its ultimately successful practical working, wherever it is tried with faithfulness and perseverance, I have little question.

GEO. B. TOLMAN, Sheldon.

In spite of all my efforts to have the Registers accurately kept, and in spite of my injunctions to the teachers, I am sorry to say, that not a single Register in the Town is returned to my hand unexceptionably correct. To the "questions to be answered by the District Clerks" five have made no replies, others have answered in part, and but few wholly and correctly. The teachers are less deficient, and yet every one has failed in one or more particulars of detail. Some have kept no record, or an imperfect one of "Deportment", others of "Daily marks" or "Absences" or "Dismissals". In one case, to the question "How many visits, &c", the answer is "Several", which puzzles my arithmetic greatly. In the main, perhaps, or to the most important questions, their answers may be right; but there is some omission or defect in every Register. As a necessary consequence, my own answers to the questions in this Schedule are only an approximation to the truth. I am obliged to supply, by previous knowledge or independent inquiries, or by conjecture, or by instinct, what I ought to be able to find at a glance in the Register, and thus my labor is vastly increased, and after all is far from being satisfactory.

District Clerks and Teachers should reflect, that the chief value of statistics is in their absolute accuracy: a few omissions on their part subject the Superintendent to a great deal of perplexing labor, and at the same time detract from the worth of his annual Report. I hope the next year will find them more faithful in this part of their duty. You will be glad to notice a decrease in the number of Tardinesses. In the first year of my official connection with the Common Schools of St. Albans, they were 14,200 in number, the second year 17,725, this year 8,000.

The character of the Schools, the past year, has been well sustained, particularly in the Districts Nos. 4 and 5; and our teachers, for the most part, have conducted the schools creditably to themselves and to the advantage of the scholars.

CHARLES FAY, St. Albans.

Our schools, the past year, have been more satisfactory than they were the year preceding. They have been more efficient and thorough, though they have not been all that could be desired. As you will perceive by the statistics, too many scholars have been tardy, and too many have been dismissed before the close of the school. This is an evil which ought to be remedied. Two of our districts have had no winter term, on account of the bad condition of their houses.

Of the common schools in this town, during the past twelve months, much might be said, in the way both of praise and censure.

Respecting our Public Schools, however, as they exist throughout the town, a word must suffice. On the whole, perhaps, they have been fully as good, during the period under review, as for several years past. Indeed, in a few not unimportant items they have been better than usual. Still this is not enough: there should be steady advancement, from year to year, in all directions. Without such progress we ought not to rest satisfied. While there have been some teachers, and in each school, various points worthy of high commendation, it is equally true, that there are also given districts, and specific matters in nearly every district, which deserve reproof, and call aloud for correction. Among many instances of neglect—to say nothing of other things—I will refer to only one particular, and this as affecting parents and tax-payers. There has been in the past, and there continues to be in the present, on the part of many who should be most interested, a particular slackness—a strange and shameful remissness—in visiting the schools in their respective neighborhoods. Every one should frequent these little

nurseries of learning—the Common Schools—at least the ones nearest his own door, that he may give due encouragement to teachers and children ; that he may also learn, in a legitimate way, how the public money is expended ; and that thus he may be able to secure its more effective disbursement in the future.

Without further reference to the use made of the means of education as distributed generally through the town, it may be proper to devote a few sentences to our Union Graded Schools. An enquiry in this direction is the more pertinent, as from this source we may expect to secure the best teachers for our ordinary District Schools ; and especially, as the subject of grading is now receiving much more than usual attention throughout the State. A Union District, with power to grade was established, in this place, by an act of special legislation, in 1862. These Schools have been since steadily coming into more and more successful operation, by slow degrees winning their way to public favor and confidence. The District is made responsible for the education of all the children within its limits, and is empowered, in order best to meet the wants of the rising generation, to classify the children, and arrange the course of study, according to its own discretion. With this end in view, the Schools are divided into three distinct Grades, termed the Primary, the Intermediate, and High School. Each of these Grades is susceptible of subdivision into two or more separate Departments, as new necessities may come up, and as the wants of the District advance. It being thus the intention, that the number of Departments shall vary with the number of pupils, and that each Department shall have at least one teacher assigned to it, there is room for an almost indefinite adaptation to whatever exigencies may arise, and ample provision for a most thorough and systematic course of discipline.

The High School has had one Principal from the beginning. It has been all along under the efficient management and excellent instruction of Mr. C. D. Mead. And thus far our highest anticipations respecting this Grade have been finding themselves realized ; very general satisfaction has been given ; in fact, the School is proving to be a success, in all its main features.

In the other Grades, as I am sorry to say, there has not been so full a realization of our expectations. The Schools have been kept in operation, indeed, but not always with equal ability. Up to the present, each Grade has had only one teacher, at a time, with the exception of the Primary, which for a while last year was divided into two Departments, for which the services of two instructors were secured. But, with all our efforts, these Schools have not improved as we could have wished. While they have been in some points making constant progress, since their establishment, they have not been in all respects, and at every stage, equally successful with the High School. This partial failure has been owing to the fact, that to a greater or less extent, the principles involved in the plan have been neglected in practice. It is possible that some of our most prominent citizens—that some whom we might expect better things—have not been in so close sympathy as they should with the movements which have in view the education of the children, no less of the poor man than of the rich. So, too, in given instances, there may not have been care enough exercised in the selection of teachers. Then, again, there has not been sufficient union between the different Schools—all the instruction in each lower having a reference to the next and more advanced Grade. Once more, it is no doubt a fact, that far too little exertion has been put forth to sustain those who have had the charge of our children—far too little pains taken to extend to them suitable encouragement, while engaged in the performance of their arduous duties. As a consequence, there have been, during the past three or four years, many changes in instructors. Such vacillation, so much lack of unity and effort, are, in themselves, inevitably a disadvantage ; they are, indeed, almost ruinous ; and they must be very hurtful, so long as suffered to continue. Many of the teachers have been good ones ; they evinced skill, and showed not a little patience, in the midst of discouragements ; and none of them, probably, has been so much in fault, as pa-

rents, district-officers and others, who have neglected to look after the interests of the schools in a wise, kindly and becoming way.

During the past year or so, however, the lower Grades have been slowly improving. They have been brought, in some points, into close conformity with the High School. In many particulars, it may be safely said, they have advanced in a marked manner, and are now far more nearly what they ought to be. As the result of not a little effort, put forth in the right direction, it is hoped, and there is a prospect, that there will be in the future greater permanency among our teachers. There are also indications, that increased zeal of a genuine kind will be evinced on the part of a larger number of our citizens. So, it is certainly to be desired—and we may confidently expect, as a fruit of proper activity, on the side of parents and citizens—that teachers likewise, as well as pupils, will be led to feel a deeper interest in the great work in which they are engaged. In both the Primary Grade, and in the Intermediate, young ladies, as better adapted to deal with the opening mind of childhood, have been thus far employed. And it should be added, both to their credit and as a simple act of justice, that they have generally worked faithfully, and some of them with eminent success.

Having made these few expositions, I may, in closing, express the hope—I should be glad to say, the firm conviction—that when another year comes around, the improvement of our Schools will be such, as to furnish many more incidents of interest to chronicle, and matter of encouragement to report, both for the sake of the rising generation, and in view of what education promises to contribute towards the permanent prosperity of the country.

Yours, very respectfully,

J. B. PERRY, Swanton.

The recent enactment terminating the practice of "boarding around" does not meet with very general approbation in the town.

The people had rather board the teacher than to pay for their board. I think that most of the districts will pay their board tax with board. They may like the law better when they become better acquainted with its workings. The Registers have been better kept this year than last, and the statistics are more reliable.

C. B. CADY, Alburgh.

I consider the recent enactment requiring the board of teachers to be paid on the Grand List, one of the best laws of the last session, and have heard no complaint about it.

J. A. CHAMBERLAIN, Grand Isle.

My opinion is, that parents become better acquainted with those they trust their children with, by teachers boarding around; and the law referred to, is not favorably received here.

I would suggest that the office of Superintendent be done away with, and that the Committees of the several districts in Towns shall constitute the examining board.

R. D. WHITEMORE, Belvidere.

We are happy to say that most of the schools in this town have made commendable advancements.

The teachers, in the main, have been quite enthusiastic, and indefatigable in their labor, and have endeavored to infuse the same laudable disposition in the hearts of their scholars. But it has been too evident in some instances that the main object of the teachers was to finish the term and receive their pay, for which they had rendered a poor compensation.

There is, we think, a criminal proclivity on the part of some to cut the teachers down to the lowest cent on their wages; and as a consequence, they have little

heart to be thorough and efficient ; whereas, had they a fair compensation for their labor, they would feel much more interested and enthusiastic in their work. We have no apparatus in our schools to facilitate the labor of the teachers, and to give the scholars a thorough insight in their studies ; which is a great detriment to the cause of education in this locality. As to ventilation, &c., there is no attention paid to these important items.

But, we hope, the many embarrassments to this great and noble cause of mental and christian culture may be removed, and parents, teachers and patrons of every grade will take hold of the blessed work with a moral heroism.

A. C. REYNOLDS, Elmore.

I think my Report in town meeting, last year, did some good, aside from making me a few enemies. It had some influence in securing for our schools a better class of teachers the present year. The Registers have been more carefully kept, and more interest has been felt by teachers in their work.

Our Teachers' Institute I remember with pleasure. It was a season of pleasure to all who were able to attend. Our teachers will be on hand the next time you come into this County. As to "boarding around", it ought to be abolished in the same year as slavery. I am glad they have both gone to the shades together.

J. G. BAILEY, Hydepark.

In closing this Report, I close my labors as Town Superintendent. It has been a lovely work, although not, indeed, a remunerative employment to one who gives it the time it requires ; but to a benevolent mind its rewards are ample.

Owing to growing infirmities, as well as the claims which other deserving and qualified men have to share such honorable and responsible employment, this may probably be my last Report.

Allow me, then, Mr. Secretary, in taking this official leave of this philanthropic work, and of you to say of both, as the good Horne said, when he had closed his masterly critique on the Psalms, "I regret that they are done." Still, thanks be to God, it will always be permitted to me to cherish for both a constant affection, and to remember them in my communings with my Divine Father. I would say, in closing, that with but one exception, our Schools, during the year, have been carried on with an efficiency that has been very creditable to the teachers, very beneficial to the pupils, and that has left the schools for coming time in a state of universal hopefulness.

JAMES DOUGHERTY, Johnson.

There are two great evils with which our schools have to contend. The first is a want of interest on the part of the parents ; the second is a frequent change of teachers. Both are detrimental to the cause of education, and tend very much to retard the progress of our schools. Indifference and neglect on the part of those who ought to feel the deepest interest in our schools, cannot fail to chill the zeal of all others. Neither can teacher or scholar be expected to labor with much ardor and perseverance, when they receive no sympathy from those from whom they have the best right to expect it.

It is impossible for us to over-rate the evils that are brought upon many of our schools by a constant change of teachers. The business of education is *progressive*. It consists of a series of processes, the later always depending upon the earlier, and requiring, therefore, to be conducted within certain limits on the same principles, and by the same methods. But at the present time hardly any two teachers can be found whose methods of teaching and governing a school are the same. No opportunity is afforded the one who succeeds, to become acquainted with the state of the school, and with the methods of his predecessor—for the one has gone before the other arrives ; thus he enters the school a stranger to the children and their pa-

rents, unacquainted with the relative propensity and aptitude of the different scholars, ignorant of the course that has been pursued, and perhaps with the intention of retiring at the expiration of three or four months. And the children will perhaps spend the whole period of his stay in retracing their studies in a new book, according to a new method. Now the apology that is frequently made for this constant change of teachers is, that the district cannot afford to support a good male teacher throughout the year; that the school must close during the summer, or be taught by a female. Then we say, *let it be taught by a female throughout the year*. For the sum that is divided between two teachers, would very handsomely pay a female teacher the whole year. Thus it would give the scholars the advantage of having the same instructors throughout one entire year, at least; and if she was faithful to perform her duties, and proved herself worthy of the charge, she could during that time so enlist the affection of the children, and the good will of the parents, as to secure a new engagement. Thus we should gradually secure permanent schools under permanent teachers.

L. S. THOMPSON, Stowe.

The citizens of this town are awakening to the true importance of our common school interests. Within the past year, one district has thoroughly repaired its School House, and others are preparing to follow suit. The Registers are becoming better appreciated by all who are anxious for improvement in our educational system; and if a little more care was exercised by some of the District Clerks, in filling out the statistical interrogatories, their value would be greatly enhanced, as an index of the actual condition and needs of our Schools. The Annual Reports of the Secretary are, in my opinion, doing great service in calling the public attention to the demands of the Schools; and as they comprise nearly all the educational literature that is generally diffused throughout the community, they should be thoroughly read by every parent and teacher in the land. The amended school law generally meets the approval of all true and earnest friends of Education, while the "old Foggies," true to their instinct, are somewhat opposed to it. What is mostly lacking in our Schools, is the want of a deeper sense of their worth by those interested in their management and control. Until this is brought about, and the community made to feel and believe in the principle that cheap schools, with poor teachers, is not sound policy, the rising generation will fail of recognising the full benefit of a thorough and systematic course, in the elementary branches, that will but fit them for the practical business of life, and the duties of citizenship.

B. S. WILEY, Waterville.

I have for the past year, more than ever before, realized our want of normal schools. Our teachers are to a great extent deficient in thoroughness in teaching; few of them ever gave the reasons for one half the rules in Arithmetic, and in all branches are too closely confined to their text-books. They lack originality of illustration, and travel the roads their parents trod. The fault is not as much theirs, as that of those, who have the power of affording better means of instruction.

As teachers are taught, they are very apt to teach. The Teachers' Institute is well managed, for the means allowed for its support, and I think its influence very beneficial; but it ought to have the power of *living* longer than it does. The duties performed by the Secretary and Superintendents are not appreciated by the Legislature. To receive one dollar for a day's work is very poor pay for one's time and labor. What one-half pays for, he should expect half done.

I am thankful that the practice of "boarding around" is terminated, and all teachers will say "Amen." No true man can complain. I have heard no fault found with the act yet. The district clerks are more negligent or careless in filling out the Registers than they should be; not half of them are filled out properly, and many teachers do not take proper care of the Registers while under their control.

R. V. WESTGATE, Bradford.

* * * There has been very good improvement the past winter, especially in the regular attendance of scholars at school. All but two of the winter schools were taught by female teachers, and a good degree of interest, energy and tact was exhibited on the part of many of the teachers in the conduct and management of the school. A want of good order was plainly visible in a very few schools. The Registers have generally been very well kept by the teachers, much more correctly than last year; but some of the district clerks have failed to make correct returns. Their vague and indefinite answers, have occasioned me much trouble and perplexity in making out this report. They should be more careful to be correct.

Our school system continues to work favorably in this town, and I am satisfied that our schools, as a whole, by the working of the present school law, have been, and still are improving in very many respects. The citizens as a general thing, manifest a very good interest in the welfare of our schools, and appear to realize the fact that good teachers and good schools should be obtained and maintained if possible.

I believe that a great impetus was given to the advancement of the condition of our schools, by the passage of the recent law placing all school expenses upon the Grand List. Not only do I believe that it will be a benefit to our school at present, but a great benefit and future blessing to our State. If the law is carried out as intended, the "boarding around" system is done away; and this, by being a great benefit to the teacher, will operate to cause our schools to be much improved; or, at least, it should be so, and they *will* be by *live* and *faithful* teachers. In my opinion teachers will be better able, and prepared to perform a *greater amount* and *more efficient* work. By observation I have been able to make, I feel assured in stating, that a large majority of our citizens are much in favor of the law, and think it is as it should be. A few complain, who have reared up families, and been at the expense of boarding the teacher upon the scholar, and now must pay upon the Grand List; but that cannot be helped if such a law is ever passed.

Within the past two years, two new and excellent school-houses have been built in districts No. 11 and 2; and by their construction, good judgment and care was exhibited in regard to the health, convenience, comfort and happiness of both teacher and scholars. We have very few really poor school-houses in town.

S. P. WILCOX, Brookfield.

I have to report an unusually large number of cases of "Corporeal Punishment" this year, but the difference is all occasioned by one district, which reported twenty cases; the schools in this district were very poorly governed, as you may well imagine.

Recent Legislation upon the subject of "boarding around," if it does away with the practice, will confer a great benefit upon the schools, and will be well received in this vicinity, I think.

It is very well to talk about higher motives, in connection with teachers' wages, yet I believe a little more liberality in this direction would be an additional inducement to teachers to qualify themselves more thoroughly for the work.

The ridiculously small pay received by Superintendents is at least no great incentive to a thorough discharge of the duties of that office.

PERLEY CHANDLER, Chelsea.

In presenting the above statistics, one remark is due in explanation. The number of citizens visits reported, three hundred and fifty-one, includes but very few *Parents*; and teachers should have been more regardful of the Secretary's direction in this matter. We regret, however, that parents are not more

interested to personally inspect the condition of their schools, and thus through a generous co-operation, and a manifest solicitude, give a healthier tone and character to school discipline.

Our school buildings are anything but satisfactory. This is a serious as well as a culpable mistake. It is barely possible, that an intellect disciplined and developed in one of our miserable rickety uncouth school cabins, may put on as fair and symmetrical proportions, with habits, tastes and aspirations, as exact, critical and lofty, as one raised amid the healthful, inviting and inspiring surroundings of a model school building; but the probabilities are strongly in favor of dwarfing the intellect, distorting the disposition and blunting the sensibilities. We hope in this matter, there may be a decided reform, and that the fifteen buildings now unfit for blacksmith shops, may be replaced by fifteen convenient and comfortable school-houses.

A higher standard of school discipline and scholarship ought to be attained in our common schools.

The common school is 'the peoples' university, and there is no reason why every scholar should not here receive as thorough and critical elementary discipline as can be attained elsewhere, and if our school was what it ought to be, these results would be attainable. Of the great mass who daily attend the common school, but few avail themselves of higher instruction, and business life finds them as, and where, the common school left them.

How important then, and how significant is the common school, and with what care and solicitude should it be directed. We want more thorough and critical instructors,—persons who are really in earnest,—who are skillful, and masters of their business. It is in this connection that we appreciate the importance and instrumentality of our Teachers' Institutes in affording our instructors useful hints, and instruction in one of the most difficult and responsible vocations—teaching.

It is hoped that the next Institute of the county will be held in this town. It is with a feeling of regret, that we are constrained to allude to a sad omission in one of our authorized text-books in mathematics. We refer to Greenleaf's Common School Arithmetic. In the State of Vermont, among business men, perhaps eight-tenths of the negotiable notes given are with annual interest; and yet, our text-book is entirely silent regarding the principle and method of computing annual interest. In our past year's examination of teachers, we found many deficient in this matter, while of scholars nine-tenths had no acquaintance with the principle of annual interest. We would respectfully commend the subject to the consideration of the Board of Education, through the Hon. Secretary, and pray that our text-books should conform as nearly as possible to the requirements of common life.

The schools of this town suffer much from the present improper and highly pernicious district system. We have twenty-three districts, when fourteen could be made to subserve, very much better, the convenience and profit of our schools; yet, to re-district the town on a correct basis, would give rise to much malevolence and prejudice, and for a while, at least, we cannot hope for better results. It is in view of this, that the Superintendent has been led to the conviction that our old district system should be supplanted by one yielding more economy and profit; and in this way, let the towns assume all the responsibility now exercised by the district corporation, such as providing and locating school buildings, &c., while the duties of the Prudential Committee and Superintendent shall be omitted, and vested in a Committee chosen by the town, the said Committee consisting of three, and so elected at first, that while afterwards each individual holds his office three years, yet a vacancy shall occur each year.

This is no untried innovation, but a similar system has been in operation in Mass. for the last five years, and with results highly satisfactory and corrective.

Touching the merits of the recent statute of supporting the common schools entirely upon the Grand List, we can but give it our hearty approbation.

This places the common school upon its true basis, and makes it what we have long claimed for it, a free institution, affording alike to the child of affluence or penury the same opportunity of cultivating his intellect and preparing him, by lessons of wisdom and patriotism, for the great and responsible duties of life.

CALEB C. SARGENT, Corinth.

I am very much in favor of terminating the practice of "boarding round"; but I fear that the recent enactment will not accomplish the object, for several of the districts in this town have been in the habit for years of having the board upon the List, and yet have the teacher board around. I think the new law is generally well received in this town, though, at least, our wealthy and influential men say "Probably the children will be clothed by a tax on the grand list next year."

JOHN STRATTON, Fairlee.

Our schools, during the past year, have been of a very fair grade. A few teachers have failed from want of ability to govern, but some have been under evil influence from the people. In the main, however, the people in some small measure appreciate the importance of good schools. The time is not yet, when our schools have the services of first class teachers throughout the term and year. Several of them have had fine teachers, others have been too young. The people from year to year are becoming more in earnest: they have already provided a fair class of houses; with a few exceptions, these will soon be built, I trust. Committee-men, in some cases, hire the cheapest teachers—though the poorest. A few cases of this kind have occurred within the year. In my next, I hope to give more satisfactory statements.

E. H. RANDALL, Randolph.

I am of the opinion that "boarding around" is not beneficial to the schools; but there is a class of men in this town opposed to boarding on the grand list. Not contributing children to the State, they are too selfish to be willing to help educate the children of others. The education of all the children, *pro bono publico*, is the essential idea of our common school system; hence all should aid according to their ability in thus promoting the power and prosperity of the State. Indeed, justice would seem to require that those who do not contribute children to the State, should make up the deficiency as much as possible, by doing the more to educate those reared by others. This opinion is based upon the theory that intelligent citizens are the wealth and power of the State.

I did not receive the notice of the Teachers' Institute, last year, until too late for any this way to attend. Very few of the teachers in this vicinity have ever attended. I wish we could have one near, and get them out. It would be profitable, I think.

If Superintendents were chosen for a longer term, say 3 or 5 years, and invested with power to control the schools, it would give them an opportunity to benefit the cause of education. It takes a year or two to get the "run of the schools".

The law directs the Superintendent to "adopt all requisite measures for inspection, examination, and regulation of the schools, and for the improvement of the scholars in learning," and in the same language imposes the same duty upon the Prudential Committee. Who is to do it? "Many cooks spoil the broth." The rule seems to be, that the Prudential Committee must be by turns in the District, then frequently a relation must be the teacher. The question is, who shall get the money? not whether there shall be a good school, or not. As the Prudential Committee is virtually king in his district, the result is

obvious. We hope in due time to have an improved list of school books, the readers are especially getting to be an old story to the children.

T. L. SINCLAIR, Stafford.

I cannot say that I think our schools are advancing. I am aware that our law is very good, and excellent provisions have been made for the intellectual and moral culture of the youth and children of our common schools. I am aware, also, that we have many good teachers; but, Sir, if certain evils relative to our schools are permitted to remain in our midst, the efforts of the friends of education to advance the Common School interest, must prove almost an entire failure. These evils, I think, arise from a lack of interest on the part of officers and parents.

This is evident:—

1st. From the condition of our School houses. In the nineteen districts in town, we have but two or three houses fit to hold school in, and but one of them is what it should be. Many of our houses are mere tumble-down shanties, a disgrace to the districts where they are located. If our people could justly plead poverty, they would be excusable. But this is not the case, for most of them, if not wealthy, are well off. The only reason that can be offered for this state of things is lack of interest.

2d. From a failure on the part of the districts to furnish Dictionaries, Globes, Outline Maps, Clocks, Thermometers, &c., for their schools. In none of the schools in town is anything of the kind to be found except one Thermometer.

3d. From the principle that governs in the relation of teachers. I find it often the case, that instead of being solicitous about securing good teachers, quite an interest is felt on the part of parents to obtain cheap teachers; though in that case, they throw away their money, and their children grow up in ignorance.

4th. From the negligence on the part of officers and parents to visit the schools.

I found on looking over the district registers that in nineteen districts, there were only eight visits made by Committees. We have nearly four hundred youth and children attending school in town, and I will warrant, that not a dozen visits have been paid by parents.

This is a sad picture, yet it is a true one.

That the friends of Education in this town will awake to a sense of their own interests, and a sense of the obligations they are under to their children, to their neighbors' children, and to posterity, is our sincere desire.

As far as I know, the law terminating the practice of "boarding around" is well received among our people. I think it an excellent law.

L. C. POWERS, Topsham.

Of our schools, the past year, a large proportion have been decidedly good; yet there have been a few poor ones, and two or three worse than useless. This is due to a too prevalent desire to hire cheap teachers, and to a want of care in the selection of the best men for Prudential Committees.

There has been quite an improvement as to regular and prompt attendance this year over the last. There were only 18 last year who had no absences. This year 85. This year there were 805 less instances of Tardiness than last year. This result has been obtained principally by the efforts of teachers, and the promise of the Superintendent to report the names of those who distinguished themselves by having no absences, and of those having no instance of tardiness. Last year there were of dismissals before the actual hour of closing school, 818; this year only 443.

Of the teachers employed, six were obliged to leave their schools before the expiration of the terms, by reason of sickness; and one left his school for inability to instruct and manage his school.

Our schools could be very much improved by a more active interest on the part of Prudential Committees, Parents and Guardians; and if you would favor the people of this town with a lecture on the subject of common schools, I think it would pay them well, and tend to awaken a more active interest in our schools.

The Registers are kept pretty correctly by most of our teachers, yet some are quite at fault; and some of the district clerks are still more in fault than any of the teachers, occasioning the Superintendent a great deal of time, expended in making up his report.

The Annual Reports of the Secretary of the Board of Education are well calculated to advance the interests of Education in our State. They contain much useful information, and many suggestions of a practical nature, and have been of great benefit; and are in my opinion destined to have a still more beneficial effect when the information they contain shall be more generally diffused.

The Teachers' Institutes are valuable to all who attend them, and especially teachers.

The recent enactment intending to terminate the practice of "boarding around," has its advocates and its opposers. It is now difficult to say which will prevail. Some districts will board their teachers around as usual, but upon the Grand List.

G. ROLFE, Tunbridge.

* * * As far as I have learned, the new law, as to putting the board on the Grand List, was recognized at the District meetings. One, where the teacher has always boarded around, voted to provide one boarding place for the winter. It is hoped that the law will gradually work a favorable change for teachers; but, when they board around on the Grand List, they will have the more places to go to. This very thing will be likely to work out in the end the design of the law: to provide one steady boarding place.

Our public schools are among the common mercies, which every year are bestowing upon our communities unnumbered blessings. We should make them as good as we can, because they cost so much. A good school costs something more than a poor one, but far, far less than the greater value of the good one; while a poor school is money thrown away. I am happy to be able to say, that we have had a worthy band of teachers, and there has been no serious difficulties in any of our schools. Of our 18 schools, I may call 4 superior, 8 good, 5 middling, 1 poor. One district has had the same teacher for both terms, and also the same teacher for the previous year; and in both cases to the manifest benefit of the schools. There has been but one male teacher employed during the year. I am glad to report his school as among the best, but the wages he received were out of all just proportion, being four times more than the teacher of the summer schools, and \$2,75 per week more than the highest wages given to our female teachers this winter.

I have thought there was a deficiency of books in the schools of this town, rather than a surplus. In some cases children were learning to read from the spelling book, or to spell from the reading book. In other cases, they were unprofitably confining themselves to reading and spelling, for want of other books. In other cases, the parents have delayed for weeks to procure the needed book, or perhaps failed to get it at all.

Of the whole number of school children, about two-thirds are enrolled on the Registers, and the average attendance about one-half. Of our school-houses, three are totally unfit for the purpose; three may be regarded as passable, and four only can be reported as comfortable.

CHAS. DUNN, Vershire.

I find that our district clerks are very remiss in their duty in filling out and returning their Registers, and in my annual report to the town, I urged the necessity of care in the selection of Clerks and Committees.

The practice of "boarding around" has long been the custom in this town, and it is done on the Grand List, so that no fault is found in regard to the recent enactment.

As a general thing, our schools have been well visited, except by Prudential Committees.

They have been taught with one exception by females. One of the greatest hindrances to the progress of our schools is tardiness, and in this I think the parents are greatly to be blamed.

J. B. DEARBORN, West Fairlee.

I must say to the credit of our teachers and district clerks, that the school Registers have been better kept, during the past year, than ever before, which I attribute to an awakened interest in, and realization of their importance.

A great mutual benefit can be derived by a free interchange of thought in any occupation, and I know no way, by which a teacher can be more benefitted in so short a space of time as in our Teachers' Institutes. Many of our teachers have expressed a desire to have the next Teachers' Institute for this County, holden in this town, or its vicinity, so that they may better avail themselves of its privileges.

The popularity of that time-worn practice of "boarding around" has been on the wane, in this town, for some time past, and both teachers, and patrons of teachers, hail with joy the approach of the law that shall put an end to their sitting from place to place, "seeking rest and finding none." While another class of men oppose the new law "in toto."

H. S. DAVENPORT, Williamstown.

Cannot any thing be done, to compel teachers to be present at the public examinations? They have proved almost a perfect failure in this town, the past two years; because there has been but three or four teachers present at any one examination, and from that to none.

R. B. SKINNER, Barton.

Small scholars are too often neglected in our schools. Writing should have more attention.

The new law giving teachers a steady boarding place will be well received by a great majority.

As to Teachers' Institutes, no teacher can afford to lose them; and no district can afford to hire a teacher who neglects them.

There has been great improvement in our schools, but we want more yet; more life and energy on the part of the teachers, scholars and patrons.

D. H. AUSTIN, Brownington.

Only let me refer to a few *prominent evils*, which should be remedied, and which, I presume, do not attach alone to this town, viz: *bad school houses, cheap teachers and a strange lack of interest* by the people in the welfare of the schools. Add to this, frequent *changes of Superintendents*, making their services, which, by permanency, might be valuable, almost worthless. So far as I am acquainted in these northern towns, the common practice is to change Superintendents almost every year. The object of the State in having such an office is thus almost entirely defeated.

We have one excellent school-house in town; two or three tolerably good, the rest decidedly poor, and "unfit" for use. The past year we have had some excellent teachers.

Our present Superintendent is a man well qualified for the office, which is not a ways thought of by those who elect men for this office, but who is quite unacquainted with our Schools ; and will probably be able to effect about as much as I have this year, "more or less," and then leave, to give place to a new hand to make a year's acquaintance. How much is lost by pursuing such a policy, the people ought to know.

Carefulness in the selection, and permanency in the office of Town Superintendent would, doubtless, do much to promote the interests of our public Schools.

LEVI LORING, Charlestown.

Our people are manifesting considerable interest in the schools, in some particulars ; they want good teachers, and are generally willing to pay good prices. They like to have the Superintendent visit and look after the schools, but are negligent in visiting themselves.

I think our schools are making some progress in thoroughness of instruction, in promptness and punctuality. We report 27 scholars with no absence, and could report a much larger number with no tardiness. The instances of tardiness are indeed large, but about one half belong to the village district. In one rural district, in which several families live a mile or more from school, two-thirds of the scholars, in the summer school, had no tardy marks ; and of the 16 marks, one-half belonged to the family living nearest, and within a stone's throw. In the winter school, of 87 scholars, 28 had no tardy marks ; and of the 81 marks, 20 belonged to the same family.

The keeping of the Registers is having a very good effect with most of the scholars and families. But for a few indolent and indifferent ones, the tardy list would be quite small.

The Teachers' Institutes are doing much for the schools, through their influence on the teachers and the people who attend them. I would like much to have the Annual Report of the Board of Education read by every man, and in every family. It would do much to awaken and keep alive an interest in the schools.

I think well of the enactment terminating the practice of "boarding around". I think it will be well received in this vicinity generally.

A. R. GRAY, Cevertry.

There are a few very thoroughly qualified and excellent practical teachers, who have been employed ; but the large number fail more or less in their examination, and generally the most in the first principles of the sciences,—in the very things which, not taught in the common schools, are very likely afterwards to be entirely neglected.

The Academies and higher schools in this vicinity are neither continuous or thoroughly sustained. The Select Schools are generally superficial ; and hence perhaps the failure of thorough qualifications of teachers ; hence, also, I think, the need of Teachers' Institutes. These, I believe to be of great advantage, and I wish every teacher could and would attend them. At the same time, I submit, that the Institutes, as now held, fail to meet the case. The funds appropriated and the limited time which each one now has, cannot practically develop either the previously acquired knowledge of those who attend, or the fund of useful information which is furnished during their sessions. Aside from a want of opportunity for thorough preparation for teaching, there is another serious difficulty. My own opinion is, that a large majority of the people fail to appreciate, in any proper manner, the value of correct, thorough, scientific instruction. Only a few of the Prudential Committees, or of the parents, visit the schools, unless it may possibly be at a closing examination, and then often to be disappointed. Generally the cheaper teachers are hired first ; hence there is much less inducement to make thorough preparation than there would be, were all awake to the vital importance of our Common Schools.

I have ever, on all occasions, opposed the system of "boarding around". I have

not thought it as well for the school ; it must necessarily in the winter injure the health of any teacher, and thus unfit him for his duties ; and generally it is not economical.

CHAS. A. J. MARSH, Craftsbury.

The schools in this town, as a whole, have been much improved ; most of them have been good.

One aim, on the part of the teachers, has been to govern by the kindest of motives, and in only one exception has this rule been broken. Very close attention has been given to govern whispering, and I have been much gratified with the orderly appearance of every school. Most of the schools have been taught by females, who have succeeded admirably. In some schools it would be better to employ male teachers, who would secure better order, and greater improvement. On the subject of boarding "round" I must express my gratitude to those who felt so much interest for the good of both teacher and district, and I know of no reason why all should not be pleased with it, certainly all who have an interest in the rising generation.

I cannot forbear speaking in relation to the subject of "History" for our schools. Much ignorance prevails in relation to our own State. Had we paid more attention to the direct history of the United States, we should not have been so ignorant as we have during the past four years. I hope Rev. S. R. Hall and others will do their utmost to supply us with a condensed history of our State. I feel that the people have paid too little attention to the Reports of the State Superintendent ; if this was done, a spirit of rivalry would cause greater faithfulness and condense personal effort. Of the town reports, I am not prepared to speak of other than my own. No superintendents' report has gone into a family for the past number of years ; consequently but few know of that for which the Superintendent labors.

I feel that this State, with its present admirable school laws, might easily rank among the first of our Country, if parents would heartily cooperate with those who labor for the good of their children.

Rev. B. MERRILL FRINK, Derby.

The twenty teachers employed in our schools, all having taught before, there were fewer failures than have sometimes occurred.

The study of History was almost entirely discontinued during the past year, in reference to the introduction of the work which we have been expecting so long from Revs. Messrs. White and Hall, and which, we hope, will reward us for waiting.

The school registers can only be perfect, as there are those trained in the schools and qualified to be clerks in the districts. Omissions of items still occur. How frequently is the question, "What was the amount raised on the grand list?" answered by giving the *per cent.* : as if a stranger would be any the wiser as to the amount of money raised, by such an answer. We heartily approve of the doing away of the custom of having teachers "board around". The Teachers' Institutes are highly prized in this County, and on them we principally depend for proper advancement.

SIDNEY V. B. PERKINS, Glover.

I am happy to inform you of the general excellence of the schools in town, the past year. Teachers fail most in order. I wish I could show you a better record of the visits of the Committees. Only two visited their schools, out of twelve. I am heartily ashamed of them. Cannot something be done to wake the people up? Whose fault is it, if we have poor schools? who should be interested in having good schools, if not parents and Committees? But, still, they find fault if they do not have them, and will hardly venture to a school meeting, much less to their school.

Too much cannot be said on the subject of employing the same teacher as long as possible. I have seen much good result from it, the past year, and hope the practice will be adopted generally.

I fully concur in your views with regard to the great disparity in the wages of male and female teachers. Let justice be done speedily.

I think the act terminating the practice of "boarding around" is generally approved.

WM. W. GOSS, Greensboro.

I consider all subjects that tend to awaken the public mind to the importance of the education of the young, of great consequence. The Teachers' Institute and Annual Report are doing much in this direction ; yet there are many towns in which this influence is but slightly felt. Our town is of that number ; and our schools suffer for the stimulus that is there given to scholars, teachers and parents.

GEORGE H. WHITECOMB, Jay.

* * * * You invite the expression of my views in reference to the recent enactment terminating the practice of "boarding around". I am not acquainted with the views of the people of this town on this question. My views are, that the termination of the practice of "boarding around" will be an important step toward promoting the interest of our schools.

N. TITTERMAN, Lowell.

I have noticed in our town a more lively interest exhibited in our common schools, than has been heretofore. Our teachers have, in most schools, taken an active interest in their work. Our great difficulty has been in getting the tax payers to furnish proper school houses and maps, globes, clocks, &c., for the school room. Many of our school houses are in a state of decay, and unfit for the purposes for which they are used. It will be noticed by our statistical returns, that no money has been expended during the past year for the erection of new school houses, and but \$87.29 for repairs. This amount is insufficient, and parents ought to be made to feel and understand that the school room *ought* to be made as attractive as their own houses.

I have labored considerably with parents, in regard to furnishing dictionaries, maps, globes, &c., for the use of the school room, but without success : and not an article of this kind has ever found its way into our school-houses. I think our Legislature should take the matter in hand, and require districts to furnish books of reference, maps, globes, &c., as a pre-requisite to their drawing the public money.

The Teachers' Institutes, as they are now conducted, are of inestimable value to the school interest ; and I think even greater effort should be made to call in the tax payers and parents, and discuss the subject of good school houses and proper furniture, until they can be made to feel their value, and exert themselves to provide them.

The present enactment terminating the practice of "boarding around" is received among all friends of education as one step in the right direction, and will unquestionably do much in promoting a better state of things in our schools. Teachers are thus enabled to accomplish more ; and better schools will result. The system of registration has done and is doing much towards promoting particularity in attendance, and preventing dismissals before the usual hour of closing schools.

L. H. BISBEE, Newport.

The schools in the town of Salem, I am sorry to say, do not progress as well as I could wish. The parents do not take the interest that they ought ; and when parents care not for the progress of the child, the child will not, in most cases, try for himself. Most of the school houses are very good ; but there is a great lack of maps and books of reference. The Registers, as a general thing, have been well kept, and returned in due time, with one exception.

The Institutes I consider an invaluable help both to teachers and superintendents.

dents, and all who take an interest in schools ; and also it tends to awaken an interest in others. The reports also are very welcome visitors.

The law terminating the practice of "boarding around" I consider one of the best acts passed by the Legislature for some time : and so far as I have had opportunity to talk with the citizens, they give it their hearty approval. Some had adopted it before, and all admit it is the best way. What little I have done the past year has awakened a strong interest, that, I hope, will be for the benefit of the schools for the year to come.

J. M. GROW, Jr., Salem.

In my opinion there is much to be done, before our schools will be what they should be. There appears to be little or no interest on the part of the parents in regard to our common schools : they appear to think that when they have started their children for school, they have accomplished their whole work. I have ever entertained but one opinion in regard to the introduction of Registers in our schools ; but they are not kept as they should be.

It is almost useless to speak of the benefit of Teachers' Institutes. I look upon the system of "boarding around" as an injury to our schools ; I think the enactment doing away with it wise and just ; and, as far as I can judge, it meets with a hearty response : the property should educate the young.

L. C. MOORE, Troy.

* * * I think the new law in regard to the board of teachers will be generally very agreeable to the people of this town. Last year I had to report a great want of interest in the public schools, especially as seen in the meagre attendance of the patrons of the schools, upon public examinations of teachers. Both the examinations, this year, have been respectably attended. At the last, there was much interest shown in the exercises : this gives the Superintendent support in the faithful discharge of his duties. I have taken a whole day to visit each school twice, the past winter, so as to examine carefully into the standing and progress of each class. The appointment of my visit was given out before hand, so that parents could come in. The result has been good. Parents have thus been able to judge for themselves the deficiencies in the working of our schools. In some districts a good number of patrons of the school were present.

A beginning has been made in town, in the division of the schools, for the winter, at least, into primary and advanced grades, employing two teachers instead of one. The result is favorable. The school Registers are very useful : I made a lengthy report, at the town meeting, based partly upon the statistics of the Registers, and partly upon notes taken in the school room, as to the number of classes, and time for recitation that could be allowed. From these figures we learn that the policy of making districts smaller, is not a gain by way of classification ; for the smallest school in town, the past winter, had the largest number of classes, and the poorest classification. This was not the teachers' fault either. The Institute, last December, at Troy, was fully attended by people from all parts of this town. The effect was decidedly wholesome.

A. A. SMITH, Westfield.

* * * As to the practice of "boarding around", I am glad of the legislation on this subject, and hope that so wholesome a regulation will not be over-ruled by the cupidity of men who covet representation without taxation.

I think the schools demand the whole and undivided attention of the teachers. And I cannot see how they can fulfil their high commission by "boarding around" any more than a doctor or minister could. I think the law obtains favor in this town, except with a class of men that would find fault in heaven, were there taxes there.

J. FASSETT, Benson.

When we take into consideration the inevitable changes and tendencies in human life, the uncertainty of its ends, and the variety and complicated nature of its aims and relations ; when we reflect for a moment, that the places and positions we now occupy must soon be filled by our children, and the duties and responsibilities required at our hands, must soon be met and discharged by the rising generation ; every parent must feel the great necessity of bestowing upon the young a suitable and adequate education. Every parent must feel that the common school is the nursery in which germinate and mature those principles and rudiments of culture and thought, which lie at the foundation of future usefulness and distinction. The common school, if properly cared for and supported, will breathe the same invigorating breath of progress and reform into the minds and perceptions of our children, that the soil and genial warmth of spring do into returning vegetation.

The principles our common schools offer, and the opportunities they confer, are open alike to all, and their blessings and advantages can be had and enjoyed by the lowly and destitute, as well as by the favorite of wealth and fortune. They are the portals through which, and the instrumentalities by means of which our loved and loving offspring can reap and secure the fruits and accomplishments of an early rudimentary culture and reform ; such a culture and such an improvement as will effectually guard them against the snares and temptations of youthful life, and enable them to acquit themselves with honor and distinction in whatever sphere or capacity they may be called upon to act or to move.

The parent, however, is not the only party responsible upon this question. They, as the immediate guardians of their children, are accountable for any delinquency in furnishing books and other material necessary for use and convenience in the school room. The Committee, from the authority and supervisory powers conferred upon him, has a more direct and controlling influence in our schools, than any other individual connected with them. To him we look as the head and front of the institution. On him we rely for whatever is necessary to open and keep the school in operation. The choice and selection of a competent teacher is the first and most essential duty of the Committee to perform.

In discharging this obligation for our schools, the great aim should be to obtain teachers of suitable age and experience. It is a mistaken impression, wherever entertained, that young teachers are fit and competent for the care and management of children. Some may and do succeed well, but age and experience would enable them to succeed better. A young teacher may please the scholars, may suit and favorably impress their patrons ; may be an accomplished caterer to the freaks and fancies of children and people, and still be of little service to their schools. These qualities are very good and desirable in themselves, and perhaps quite necessary to the easy and successful management of the generality of schools ; but such qualifications and such exterior accomplishments are mere varnish upon the surface, mere finishing touches to a more needed and substantial frame-work. We must have firmness and dignity in our teachers. We must have power and administrative abilities in them, which age and experience alone can give ; such power and such abilities, as will command obedience and receive respect, and such as no teacher untrained in moral and mental strength can possess.

It is quite difficult to obtain that high and elevated grade of instruction we need and desire. The number of tried and experienced instructors is too small to meet the wants and demands of our schools. We have many true and efficient teachers among us—these whose capacities and natural energies reflect great credit upon their labors. But the supply is far below the demand. I do not wish, by this remark, to cast any reflections upon the efforts and endeavors of young and untrained teachers ; but I wish to impress upon all parties in interest upon this question, the necessity of enlisting and sustaining a greater number of able and accomplished teachers—teachers who know and understand, from personal experience, the duties and requirements connected with the profession. There is but one way to secure this result. Teaching, as an occupation, must be made more attractive. Inducements

must be held out to the ambitious and the enterprising, not only to commence, but to continue in the work. Teaching, under the present state and condition of our schools, is followed more from necessity than choice. Consequently, the generation of teachers soon passes, and we are left to the only alternative of supplying our ranks from the new beginners or raw recruits. There is a cause for this deficiency in our schools entitled to a moment's attention: the great difficulty lies in the hardships of the profession; few persons can be found who are willing to continue long in the business, from the simple fact that the school room, in its too often crowded and disorderly condition, affords no very attractive inducements for a lengthy continuance therein. Hence to escape from its cares, and to avoid its trials and perplexities, other pursuits and occupations are sought out and entered into, even at the risk of lower salaries or less compensation for services. "Anything but school teaching" falls from the lips of the young aspirant, as he leaves the scene of his first effort, "any thing but submission to so ungrateful and fault-finding an occupation" finds forcible and audible utterance, as the finale and winding up of the first three months contract.

Here, then, is the great obstacle in the way of having a suitable corps of able and experienced teachers! The immense amount of labor required of them, and the coarse, unfriendly treatment too often experienced by them, dries up every desire and aspiration for teaching, and effectually excludes from our school rooms the invaluable services of age and competency in the profession. Here, I repeat, lies the real poison. Here is seen and developed that subtle monster who breathes his venomous breath, and darts his deadly fangs into the very heart and bosom of our schools, blighting in their effects and influences, as the plague; and wasting and withering in their touch, as the fabled Upas.

There is no pursuit or calling in which it becomes our duty to engage, so completely surrounded by every consideration of responsibility and interest as that of teaching.

It is as much higher and holier in its purposes and relations to life and to our social conditions, as the mind and its improvement is more exalted and God-like, than the corruptible and perishable material that clothes and envelops it. Then, why not bestow upon the profession a corresponding care and attention? Why not encourage those who are fitted and qualified to engage in it, with the kindest treatment, and with the most liberal and attractive compensation? Why not keep and retain the services of our model and systematic teachers, instead of allowing them to pass from our employment into other and more lucrative pursuits, thereby keeping up and perpetuating that old and should-be exploded custom of eternal change in our schools, which cripples the very bone and sinew of their advancement, and draws surely and effectually upon the life and essence of their prosperity. A good, practical, thoroughly qualified teacher, is a prize to any people, and a treasure whose value and usefulness can only be estimated by the amount of services they render, and the amount of good they perform.

When we find such teachers, my advice and counsel is to keep and retain them in our schools. Pay them liberally. Make their stay and sojourn among us as pleasant and agreeable as possible. Provide them steady and comfortable boarding places, or give them salaries sufficient to furnish themselves, and not compel our teachers, after they have exhausted themselves in the school room, and reduced their forces and energies to a condition requiring rest and relaxation,—to walk over and perambulate a section of country, for lodgings and refreshments, almost as large as a Canadian Province or a German Principality. My heart and hand, therefore, as well as the good sense and judgment of the people, must and will uphold and sustain the present law upon this point.

R. M. PHILLIPS, Castleton.

I rejoice in the recent enactment terminating the practice of "boarding around," and I think it has the hearty approval of our best citizens. In my re-

port to the March meeting I said "most decidedly and earnestly do I wish to say, that the schools have been seriously injured by irregular attendance. It is very desirable that every scholar be present *every day*, and not tardy at all. Absences and tardinesses are a loss of time and a far greater loss of interest. Do let them be avoided, if possible."

Our schools all suffer from want of real hearty interest on the part of the people, and even of the fathers and the mothers. The public examination of teachers ought to be more fully attended than they are, and I think it highly important that every term of school in each district, be closed with a public examination of a full half day; and that all the parents and citizens be expected to attend as far as possible. The prospect of such an examination would have a good effect all through the term upon both teachers and scholars; tending to make the teachers thorough in their instructions, and the scholars in their studies. I have often known such an examination attended by most of the adults in the district; thirty, forty or fifty spectators present, and all deeply interested throughout.

If the oversight of the Town Superintendent and his report are to be of real value to the schools, it would seem desirable, that the report be placed in the hands of the people generally; and to this end, that it be printed with the Auditor's and Selectmen's reports; as indeed it is by some towns.

That this report may be as full and accurate as possible, the Registers should come into the hands of the Superintendent or be accessible to him, in time to prepare the report for March meeting. This is not now the case; Would it not be better that the March meeting be held two weeks later, so that all the schools may be closed before the Superintendent's report is made. The law only requires that the annual town meeting be held in the month of March, not on the first Tuesday in March. Gen. Stat. p. 106, Sect. 2.

I will not waste many words upon our poor school-houses, some of which are entirely unfit for use, especially in the winter. There is necessarily very great loss in using such poor, ill-arranged, unattractive, uncomfortable houses.

I trust the property-holders in these districts will duly consider their duty to provide better houses, good, new, comfortable, attractive houses, and that they will do their duty without longer delay.

WM. F. HERRICK, Clarendon.

The world does move; and especially in the atmosphere of our common schools are these exhibitions of nervousness, such as indicate, in the moral aspect of the thing, that uneasiness which is sure to produce reformation. It has been hard for many to appreciate the advantages of our present improved system of education; but at last very few remain who cannot see a perceptible change, and that for the *better*.

Boarding around has fairly played out, it was not only burdensome to many but of no advantage to the few; and since the war began, and we have of necessity employed a greater proportion of female teachers, it has been looked upon as imposing a task upon them almost unendurable, and all, or nearly all, look upon the legislation in that matter as a *thing of course*.

Now that boarding around has been dispensed with, may we not call the attention of the people to the proper government of our schools. It seems to me that improvements might be made, which would be of incalculable benefit to all interested. Our population being made up to a great extent of people of foreign birth, they do not appreciate the benefits of our common school system, and the consequence is, that the children of such do not like to be restrained within due bounds. We very much need reformation in our school government. Then I see nothing to prevent the desired progress of our most cherished institutions.

CHAS. H. CONGDON, Danby.

* * * As to my opinion concerning the "enactment" I am of the belief that it is one of the best laws which could have been placed on our Statute books.

I think it will be favorably received in this town. "It is a move in the right direction."

WARREN MASON, Ira.

I think the schools in this town are improving as fast as could be expected. Both parents and children take a deeper interest in schools than heretofore; a better class of teachers are engaged, and all seem to think a good education is the thing to be desired.

A growing interest can be seen in the parents, for visiting schools has become quite frequent.

The law supporting the schools on the Grand List is received with universal favor by all in this town, as being more equal in all respects, for the support of schools.

The importance of Registers cannot be over-estimated; the influence they exert on the school is salutary, and steadily increasing. The scholars, many of them, think well of having their names stand highest for good conduct, and steady attendance at school.

I think we may justly be proud of our school law at the present time, and work with renewed vigor for the cause of education.

F. F. CADY, Mendon.

The importance of the school Registers when faithfully kept, can hardly be over-estimated. They develop a multitude of facts which will greatly surprise persons who pay little or no attention to our public schools. For instance, in this town there are over 2700 instances of tardiness reported—too many altogether.

The question of the utility of Teachers' Institutes has ceased to be debatable; I believe it is generally conceded that marked improvements are resulting therefrom.

In regard to the recent enactment terminating the practice of boarding around, I have no doubt that a large majority of the people in this vicinity would have preferred that the matter should have remained as it was. They acquiesced however without complaint.

ELIJAH ROSS, Middletown.

* * * The opinion that I expressed last year in regard to the value of school Registers, Teachers' Institutes, and the Annual Report of the Secretary of the Board of Education, remains unchanged. As means of awakening a deeper interest in regard to our public schools, of securing a more general and regular attendance, and arousing teachers to a sense of the greatness and nobility of their work, they are invaluable. They are proving that they are worth many times their cost, by their influence for good, every where visible in the improved condition, and the more extended usefulness of our schools. I think no friend of public education, who knows anything concerning them, would willingly dispense with them.

The law designed to terminate the practice of "boarding around" is received differently by different persons, as they are interested, or otherwise, in the usefulness and efficiency of our common school system. Those who care and labor for the increased efficiency of that system, universally approve and sustain it; others interested only for their own pockets, condemn and oppose it. It should be said, however, that it by no means terminates the practice of boarding around. Some districts have for many years, voted to "board around on the Grand List," and they will in many cases, continue to do so. In other districts, the board is

put up at auction, for periods of one or two weeks, and in this way parceled out through the district. The law therefore needs amendment, to make it meet the end in view. One advancement however it fully secures. It terminates the practice of placing wood and board to the charge of the scholars.

T. H. ARCHIBALD, Mount Holly.

I am able to report some progress, on the whole, in higher interest, and corresponding improvement in our schools during the past year. We have had some decidedly good schools, none very poor.

Our school registers are well kept in the main, the most marked exception being in one winter school, where no tardinesses were reported. For the best reason that there would not have been so many, had a correct account been kept of them.

Much less is accomplished in our schools, most of them certainly, than might be, if every thing but the proper business of school should be banished from it. Many teachers, commonly reckoned among our best ones, seem never to have learned the importance of requiring each scholar during study hours to attend to his own business. Allow me to suggest the expediency of your calling special attention to this subject. From both experience and observation, and these not very limited,—I have no hesitation in expressing it as my deliberate conviction, that in some way, either by voluntary adoption of the rule, on the part of the scholars, or by the requirement of the teacher, it should be understood in all our schools, that there must be no communication in any manner among scholars, in study hours. The very common and mischievous practice of allowing scholars to whisper about their studies, opens a flood gate of disorder. About their studies indeed! a sharp look-out on the part of the teacher may detect the fraud,—the attempted deception, and acting of a lie for which the rule has presented the temptation; but let general permission be given to whisper in answer to a particular request, and a vast amount of whispering, disorder and waste of time will most likely be the result.

In some schools a daily report is made by each scholar, of his "deportment," including especially the question whether he has whispered or not during the day. With proper instruction and care, there is little danger of an untruthful report, and the very expectation and habit of reporting oneself, if the teacher is in earnest about it, will have a material influence in helping the scholar to remember and obey the rule, "no communication between scholars in study hours," or more briefly, and nearly to the same import, "no whispering." I submit whether you may not well have a blank in your school Registers, in which shall be made a record, to be reported to you through the Superintendents of the number of scholars who have not whispered during study hours.

We have had one school-house rebuilt (except the brick walls) during the year, making it from one of the worst, one of the best in town. Expense \$318, 64.

Among the special topics, to which I called attention in my report to the town were the following, viz: attendance upon the public examinations of teachers, and visiting the schools. Both of them are matters, if I mistake not, to which more attention should be given. Our schools would be made better, both by the expectation of visits and by the visits themselves.

You ask for the thoughts of the Superintendents in respect to school Registers, Annual Reports, &c. I have only room to say, that faithful and thorough supervision, and reporting of the actual state and wants of our schools, are indispensable to their best advancement. Let the various facts in reference to the school's progress or deficiencies be known, and then thoughtful and patriotic men will be able more intelligently to apply the proper means for their improvement.

AZARIAH HYDE, Paulet.

The school interest in this town is quite encouraging. Efforts are being made to unite the smaller districts, and build new and commodious school-houses, a thing much needed in this vicinity. I think if our State Secretary would give us a lecture upon this subject, our people would be convinced that they are agitating the right question in the right manner; and would set themselves at work, to make such alterations and improvements. I regard the recent act of the Legislature in terminating the practice of "boarding around" as very wise, and think it will result more favorable to the interests of our schools. The public generally approve of it. I hear much less said against it, and more in favor of it than I had expected; it is only those who have no personal interest in schools, and whose pockets are relieved of a little change by the tax, resulting from the law, that complain of it.

C. U. BINGHAM, Pittsfield.

Progress has been made in matter of school Registers,—the community are appreciating the importance and value attached to them, and have a desire to see the system carried into a perfect operation. It takes much care and oversight on the part of the Superintendent to convince many of the teachers of the importance of keeping a perfect record in every particular; but patience and unwearied labor in that direction will soon have the system understood, and no teacher will think a moment of disregarding the full instructions. It is highly important to elect an intelligent and faithful clerk of the district, for much of the failure in the returns of statistics is their fault and neglect. It is of more importance in many respects, to have an intelligent man for clerk of a school district, than for Prudential Committee. If you can have but one intelligent man, let him be the clerk. It is to be hoped in the future the best man in the district will be selected for clerk. My strictures may seem severe, but in my experience, very few of the district clerks are competent for the position.

Good influence is being exerted upon teachers, schools and the community, by the annual Teachers' Institutes. A better, more enlarged, and intelligent public feeling is being created by them. We now need in this commonwealth a good State Normal School, to educate teachers for their special duty. We trust the day is not distant, when the people, especially the Legislature, will provide such an Institution.

I am decidedly of opinion that good will result from the passage of the law, terminating the practice of "boarding around". It has been growing into disuse for a long time in this locality.

The schools of our State are making rapid progress under the supervision and labor of the Secretary of the Board of Education, and will attain a position of which every citizen may be proud, if the efforts be not relaxed.

HENRY CLARK, Poultney.

The annual reports of Superintendents I think are of great importance, in giving a great amount of facts and information to the people, which they otherwise would not receive. It likewise gives some dignity to the office. Before the law recognized a report from the Superintendent the office was about on a par with that of hog constable; but now the office is considered more honorable, and his report is listened to with honor and respect.

The law requiring the whole expense of the school to be defrayed on the Grand List, meets with general favor, as we had adopted the principle in every district, before the law requiring it was passed.

But why should Superintendents be so poorly paid? while all other labor is so well remunerated. The Superintendent gets the paltry sum of one dollar per day and board himself, finds his own team or "frogs it," while other labor commands two dollars per day and found. I for one cannot conceive how the Secretary can spend all his time and earnings, for the paltry salary he receives, un-

less perchance he is a bachelor; then I think he must board at a third class hotel and black his own boots.

LYMAN H. HODGMAN, Sherburne.

Accurate statistics, as reliable data for future use and improvement, cannot be over-estimated. They furnish, in reference to many essential points, a correct photographic view of the condition of common schools throughout the State. For lack of these we should be left to doubtful conjecture, and must necessarily arrive at uncertain and inaccurate results in our closest calculations in relation to many important matters pertaining to our educational interests. And the teacher who is so deficient in interest in the cause of education, and so derelict in duty, as not to promptly and correctly furnish the facts called for in school Registers, may be regarded as unworthy the responsible position he or she may occupy.

Teachers' Institutes are also of incalculable value; and the only regret is, that they are not of more frequent occurrence, and longer continuance; that the teachers who attend might not only treasure up the vital principles inculcated, but be favored with an opportunity to take some practical lessons in the important work of instruction. Annual Reports also furnish many important facts and valuable suggestions which may be of essential service to those engaged in instructing the young.

The recent act abolishing the practice of "boarding around," so far as my knowledge extends, is looked upon with very general favor, and is in my opinion a timely arrangement, although it may to some extent, deprive parents of the pleasant acquaintance and agreeable society of teachers; and teachers of a more intimate knowledge of the several families in their respective districts; yet it will tend to lessen the burden and increase the right on the "sunny side" of the teacher's vocation; and in its practical workings we shall doubtless see the wisdom of the act, and many confidently anticipate very beneficial results. It will do away with the unpleasant and difficult practice of female teachers "boarding around," especially in the winter season.

Among many things of much importance in our common schools, good order is essential to rapid development. So far as my observation extends, all things else being equal, the proficiency of pupils is almost in exact ratio with the order in schools. Teachers must not only possess the ability to control pupils, but parents must sustain teachers in enforcing wholesome discipline.

HUBBARD EASTMAN, Shrewsbury.

I apprehend your plan for terminating the practice of "boarding around" will be ineffectual, and I suppose boarding may be distributed, as it is now in some districts, upon the Grand List, as well as according to the number of scholars sent. I see nothing in the law of our last Legislature to prevent such a practice.

ALDACE WALKER, Wallingford.

The school Register is an important aid in awakening an interest in our schools.

Teachers' Institutes are of great utility to those who attend them, and make a practical use of their suggestions. Could the Annual Reports be more generally read, they would more surely serve the end of their publication.

By some means,—either the study of our National History, or a text-book prepared for the purpose,—our common schools should secure to those who are to become the citizens and supporters of our National honors, more intelligent notions of the structure and operations of our political institutions; is it not

time that this thought should enlist the attention of every parent and every patriot?

H. R. COLBY, Barre.

I think our schools all improving that the school law is working well. The duty of teachers and clerks in regard to the Registers, needs to be urged upon those concerned.

Allow me to suggest that it might be of advantage to Superintendents, if the school blanks could be sent to them before the closing of the schools; especially to those who have not had previous experience as Superintendents. Had I received this earlier, and thus known what was required, I could have avoided some perplexity, and secured the items to be reported with less labor.

J. F. STONE, Berlin.

I am happy to be able to report a decided improvement, and an increasing interest in our schools, for the past school year. This is more gratifying when we take into consideration the disarrangement of all kinds of business, everywhere, on account of our National difficulties, yet the interests of education have not been neglected; but in New England, in Vermont, schools for the diffusion of knowledge have been liberally maintained; and are becoming better and more efficient year by year. The people everywhere are beginning to acknowledge, that it is the free schools that are giving the growth, strength and permanency to our Nation. The friends of Education throughout the State, have never been more devoted than they are now, giving new encouragement to teachers by their devotion.

As our teachers year by year receive new encouragements, they become more zealous and active, they have a deeper and more heartfelt interest in the great work in which they are engaged. The qualifications of teachers in this town for the past year, with few exceptions, has been better than ever before. Most of them have been devoted soul and body to their work, and they will compare well with the best teachers in the State. It is because we have had better teachers this year, that has made our schools decidedly better. It is of the utmost importance to see that the best teachers are secured in place of those things who call, and set themselves off as teachers.

It has been the custom and habit of many voters in the various school districts, through the State, to entirely absent themselves from all school meetings; thus giving the entire control of the school into the hands of a few men, and they are almost always men opposed to the school laws.

There is most always some one in the district who has a cousin, or a niece, or some particular friend, who is in a dying condition unless they can by some way or means obtain the school. He manages to get elected committee, and then puts his friend into the school, without reference to his or her suitableness, qualification and character.

In this way our young men and women who have spent much time and money in preparing and fitting themselves as teachers, are entirely shut out from employment in this State, and are compelled to seek other fields of labor. Many go South and West, and into other parts of the country as teachers, thus taking from the schools their best material, while it should be the duty of the State to protect them. Can this evil be avoided? and how? Let every man open his heart and his purse for school purposes. Let every man go to every school meeting, and see that the best man is made committee; one who is in favor of, and will execute the school law to its letter and spirit, and who will employ the best teacher in the State without reference to expense or favoritism, one who will visit the school, and see that the school-house is furnished with all it needs, and all that will make school pleasant and profitable; one that will give the teacher a steady and good home during her school term; one who will

protect and care for her in the performance of her arduous duties; one who will see that the teacher has an opportunity to attend every Institute and Teachers' meetings, and will see that she attends. In short, have that man for committee who will do and discharge every duty in every respect.

When we have such men for our Committees, it will be no longer necessary for our best teachers to seek other fields of labor, but they will be employed in our own State, and thus give our own State the best schools of the Nation.

J. P. LAMSON, Cabot.

* * * The schools in Calais during the year, have generally been acceptable and useful. Wherever a good teacher has really been desired, and a worthy price paid for such a person, a good teacher was found, and the schools have prospered accordingly.

The recent enactment terminating the old practice of boarding around, cannot fail in my judgment to be of marked benefit to all concerned.

The children of a republic, should be educated by the property of a republic; so that rich and poor may share alike the benefits of the public school. The masses must be educated. The stability of a government like our own demands it. Some grumble about the new law, and say that it is arbitrary; and deprives the districts of the right of supporting their schools in their own way. This may be true for all laws are necessarily arbitrary, but it is hard to perceive how this law is more so than others. Happily those who complain are not very numerous, and are all well able to contribute their share towards the support of the public schools. They are generally a class who have no children to cry for bread. The majority of parents, and all true teachers are pleased, I think, with the "new idea of things," and all that appears to be necessary to make it popular with all, is a fair trial.

LEE H. BLISS, Calais.

* * * The schools of this town for the past year, with one or two exceptions, have been very good; as compared with former years; there has been less complaint against teachers. I think the act passed last fall requiring the whole expense of schools to be defrayed by tax on the Grand List, is as it should be. Nearly all with whom I have conversed on the subject are of the same opinion. I think it is much better for teachers to have one boarding place. It is very well received in this district (No. 5) and I see by the Registers that several districts in town have furnished steady boarding places for their teachers.

JAMES D. ROBERTS, Duxbury.

The common schools in this town seem to enjoy a moderate degree of prosperity. Fortunately the Prudential Committees in the districts noted for "rebellion," have been of the right stamp, and with their efficient co-operation, the teachers succeeded with gratifying results.

Since a much larger tax is required to defray the expenses of school, by boarding the teacher on the Grand List, we hope to see more interest manifested by parents in order that their children may gain the worth of their money. Should this locality be blessed with the teachings and influences of one or more of year Institutes, (as it never has been) I am sure the progress of school reform would be largely augmented.

I find some school Registers defective in rendering a full report, which fault is due both to teachers and district clerks; notwithstanding I made no little effort to remind them of their duty in this particular. Other faults I might mention, but suffice to state, I shall do all in my power to remove the same; feeling truly thankful that the schools in this town are in a fair way to maintain a higher standard of discipline and instruction.

N. DAVIS, Jr., East Montpelier.

The schools of our town the past year, have been better as a whole, than for three years previous. We have had three schools; three districts have supported schools three terms the year past. Twenty-five scholars have not been absent or tardy during the year. There have been 551 less instances of tardiness and 296 less dismissals than the year before.

We have had more visits of committees and parents, than last year. The order in the schools has been good, and there has been a decided change in giving lessons suited to the capacity of the scholars; and another "good omen," I have found several teachers teaching in the same districts as before.

Many of the young teachers have manifested an earnestness and zeal in their calling, which gives great promise of usefulness in the future.

You ask my opinion of the recent enactment terminating the practice of "boarding around." I am well pleased with it. Three of the thirteen districts voted to board their teacher in one place, and a number of others were prevented by a small majority voting against it, consequently the wood and board was on the scholar, and some families not feeling able to bear their share of the tax kept their children at home. Now for this, there is no excuse. Our school Registers are kept better each year, which is of itself encouraging. The manner in which a Register is kept is a pretty sure indication of what the school is. The effect of your Institutes upon teachers has been good. I wish all our teachers would attend them. The reading of the Annual Report would not only benefit teachers, but enlighten citizens. It is a valuable document; I regard that and the school Registers as indispensable.

H. L. McELROY, Middlesex.

* * * I am decidedly in favor of the recent enactment terminating the practice of "boarding around." It has not been in practice in this village for several years, and is not common in the three districts out of the village.

I wish we could have a Teachers' Institute in this place. I think it would benefit the teachers here and in this vicinity.

Evidently, the Union School, graded as we have it in this place, is a great improvement on the old system. It ought to be adopted in every village of any considerable size in the State.

Teachers generally are doing better than formerly, still there is great room for improvement in the management of the pupils, and skill in inspiring scholars, and awakening and inspiring their minds.

ELI BALLOU, Montpelier.

* * * Our good folks in this town have yet to learn the importance of keeping a school Register. I am often asked, what benefit there is in this Register business? What good is there in putting down the dismissals and tardinesses? Now I always answer the questions the Yankee way, by asking another. Sir, what do you send your children to school for? You must understand, if you send your children to school to learn, that they will learn twice as much in two hours as one, or twice as much in two days as one; on the other hand, in order to accomplish anything they must attend to their business. There is no better way to tell of the improvement in our schools from year to year, than the keeping the Register. I have been a teacher for twenty years, and I have seen no better plan for keeping a record, than the Registers.

In regard to the law terminating this "boarding around" I would say, it should have been enacted years ago.

* * * I lament to answer the questions you require of me, for by the answer, you must see that our town takes very little interest in the cause of education. Not a dictionary, not a globe, not an outline map, not a thermometer, not a clock, nor any apparatus in any school in town. I am sorry to report to you, that we have only four decent school-houses in town out of thirteen; and

farther, because I reported the condition of some of the school-houses, the people were offended and said, I was doing something I had no business to do. * * *

DAVID C. HOLT.

* * * The great trouble with our schools is, that parents are not interested in them as they should be. The result of this is, in too many instances, *poor* school-houses and *cheap* schools. It is also seen in the great number of tardinesses and absences we have to report.

In this direction the school Registers are doing a good work. They are coming to be more fully appreciated and better kept, and as a consequence they exert a greater influence for good.

I consider the Teachers' Institute of very *great* importance, and wish for the *good* of our teachers and schools, one could be held in town as often as once a year at least.

So far as I have learned, the law terminating "boarding around" is favorably received here. During the past year in five of our districts board was provided for the teacher at one place. I can but think that this plan universally adopted will do much toward elevating the standard of our schools. It will certainly make teaching in our common schools more attractive employment, and tend to influence experienced teachers to continue in the business.

WM. S. HAZEN, Northfield.

I have delayed a little in forwarding my report, in order to fill out all statistics as correctly as possible. This has been necessary for the reason that the district clerks did not understand their duties exactly, or they made mistakes. The teachers have been very correct in keeping their Registers generally, though in one instance I learned from the teacher, that the Prudential Committee told her she must not keep a record of the Deportment, Punishment, Tardiness, Dismissals, &c. The deportment in our schools, with one or two exceptions, has been very good; there has been considerable interest and pride awakened upon the subject of good behavior, prompt regularity in attendance, &c., the past year. Scholars begin to feel a joy that the record in the Registers against their name is clean, and ashamed if filled with marks; and this is having a salutary influence. I wish some plan might be adopted whereby our schools should all be furnished with globes, outline maps, thermometers, clocks, dictionaries, &c. I wish further that it might be made imperative, not only for the Superintendent to make a report to the town, but that the report should be printed either in the newspapers, or by itself, and circulated in town. I think this would be very beneficial to the officer and to the schools.

Our school-houses in this town are sadly deficient and behind most other towns.

I herewith send you my report of the town, nearly in full, although it is not printed.

C. M. WINCH, Plainfield,

* * * As to the recent law terminating "boarding around" there seems to be a general apathy among us. The time for working up feeling has, perhaps, hardly come. When the time comes for voting money to pay bills, we can tell better how men feel; I think, however, that the best informed (unless they are heavy tax payers) approve the measure. My own judgment is that any teacher who is fit to be in a school, will keep a better one, having a home, than roaming the entire district. Still there is a class of teachers, whom no advantages would help to improve their schools; they have no studies in connection with their schools; hence they might as well be visitors as not, during the entire term. No doubt, however, the law is a step in the right direction; and

its usefulness will be greatly increased by raising the standard of qualifications necessary for a place in the school,—even as teacher.

What effect would a law have which should put the power of hiring teachers into the hands of Superintendents.

ALDEN LADD, Roxbury.

* * * The Teachers' Institute held here last December, was interesting and profitable to the majority of teachers, parents and patrons of the schools. The attendance was excellent, and I think I have seen favorable results in our winter schools,—some of them have been remarkably good.

I have taken much pains for a year or two, to awaken an interest in both teachers and scholars in respect to punctuality and regularity of attendance. I promised to read in town meeting the names of all the scholars who were not tardy, and of those who were not absent a day during the term. I assured the teachers at their examination, that I should in my report prepare the lists of schools and teachers in which the excellence of each in respect to these two points should appear. At considerable labor I ascertained the proportionate number of tardinesses and absences in each school. The school and teacher having the least number of tardinesses in the report in proportion to the number of scholars ranked first, and others according to excellence. Another list showed the merit of each school and teacher in relation to absences. There was great interest all over the town, and I report as one of the favorable results, 1650 less tardy marks than last year. In one school there but five tardinesses during the whole term. Eighty-seven scholars had no absences. I do not know how large this gain is, but presume you will find it quite large. The wages of female teachers have evidently been raised during the year. "Boarding around" is not practiced in this town, and has not been for several years, save in our small districts.

A. B. DASCOMB, Waitsfield.

* * * * I think Teachers' Institutes are doing much to improve our Common Schools. The one held in Waitsfield, last winter, was worth more than twice its expense to the town of Warren. I noticed a decided improvement in the schools taught by those who spent two days at the Institute.

I hardly know how the enactment to board teachers on the grand list is received, as I have heard but little said upon the subject. My own mind is in favor of it. But the law should be more definite. I suppose the makers of the law designed to accomplish two objects: 1st, to tax the property for the board of the teacher; and 2d, to give the teacher a steady boarding place. In the enactment referred to the first object is attained, but the second is not. I understand that some districts have voted to let each tax payer board the teacher a sufficient length of time to liquidate his tax for board, thus sending the teacher around among the tax payers of the district. I hope the next Legislature will amend the law so as to make it more specific.

JOHN DOLPH, Warren.

The enactment of last year, placing the entire support of schools on the grand list, and thus ending the antiquated system of "boarding around", meets, as far as I know, the approval of the people of this town. It is certainly most welcome to the teachers.

There were many good schools in town, the last year. Schools where the live, scholarly, patient, untiring teacher infused the same spirit to almost every scholar, and the advancement was rapid and thorough; but, I regret to say, the character of the schools, as a whole, was, in my judgment, below the average. Some of them

were worse than worthless,—were positively pernicious. Many of the teachers were too young, and yet one of the oldest and most experienced teachers made one of the saddest failures.

It will be seen by the statistics, that most of the schools have been taught by females. It is no injustice to say that the schools taught by females were quite equal to those taught by males, I entirely agree with the remarks in your report, in regard to the employment of females and their compensation : I should be sorry to see our men all withdrawn from our schools as teachers. We need their sympathy and cooperation ; and in no way can we make so sure of it in all their lives as by putting them into our schools. Many districts need the stimulus of their vigorous and manly energies. I would not discourage the young men from the teacher's calling, but bid every true and successful one God speed in it. But, after all, the main work must be done by females ; and the most of it, other things equal, they will do better than the most gifted of young men. Doing the work of a man, and doing it as well or better than he, reason and conscience would say, give them equal pay.

As I said, last year, so say I now, the great and crying mischief in our schools is the irregularity in attendance. But it seems well nigh useless to say anything upon it, so heedless and indifferent are parents to it. I will not tax your patience with a homily.

C. C. PARKER, Waterbury.

The subject of school houses has not, until recently, received that attention from the people of this town to which its importance entitles it. Consequently, the 12 school houses in the several districts, with three or four exceptions, present a neglected, and in some cases, repulsive appearance, without any of those appliances and exhibitions of taste so necessary to the comfort and proper cultivation of the faculties of the scholars.

There can be no doubt that the school room, with its surroundings, exerts a very decided influence,—healthful or unhealthful, as its own character,—upon the progress of the scholars in study, and their general deportment in the school and out of it. Neither can there be any doubt that a just appreciation of the importance of these institutions, with the consequent growth of interest in the same, will early develop itself in the material and general improvement of the school houses, both in their furniture and surroundings. As you will see from the above replies, all of our school rooms are entirely destitute of a dictionary, outline maps, clocks, or any books of reference, and no apparatus, with the exception of black-boards, with which all are better or worse supplied. * * * * *

The law putting the whole support of the schools on the general list is generally acquiesced in with good feelings. Indeed the majority of the people in this section have been in favor of so doing for some time, as is evinced by all the districts in town, except one, so supporting their schools the past year.

C. C. ABBOTT, Worcester.

The school Registers have been filled out with considerable care and accuracy, as I judge. Some of the Registers have not been kept as clean and neat as would be desirable ; but they seem to have answered their purpose in a good degree. There has been in town a decided increase of interest in the educational statistics secured in this way.

The teachers in this town very generally attended the Institute held in Windham County; and manifested more than usual interest in the exercises. It has become a settled conviction, not only among our teachers, but also among our intelligent citizens, that these Institutes are among the most available means for the improvement of our public schools. They instruct the teachers, arouse the public mind, and infuse a new spirit into the whole community. The Annual Report for 1864 was read with deep interest by those who received it. It is full of valuable suggestions,

and is only to be regretted that it cannot be published in some form so that it can be read by the whole community.

"Boarding around" I have always regarded as an evil. It is abusive to the teacher, expensive to the district, and injurious to the school; and so far as I know, the enactment terminating this practice is well received in this town. Without regard to the law, all but four districts have given their teachers a stated boarding place. The public interest in our schools has steadily increased since I have been officially connected with them; and the scholars themselves, in most instances, have greatly improved. The new school houses, with modern improvements, have been erected back upon our hills; and there seems to be a growing interest in all that constitutes the necessary means of promoting public education.

HIRAM ORCOTT, Brattleboro.

The law requiring the expense of teachers' board and fuel to be raised by a tax on the grand list should have been, in my opinion, passed before; for it must prove beneficial to the schools throughout the State.

There is no complaint of the law, except by some "old fogies" who have no children, and some who complain of any plan for the public good, if it costs them any thing.

LABUN JONES, Jr., Dover.

* * I am more and more impressed with the wisdom of retaining the same teacher, if successful, a series of terms. The difference in compensation should not operate as a cause for exchanging a successful teacher for a stranger. We can compute the difference between 50 and 60 dollars, but we cannot compute the difference between a good and poor teacher. The general spirit and sentiment of a district should be such, that the prudential committee will not feel restricted and hampered in the price he shall pay. Let it be his great care to secure the services of one who shall be strict to govern, and thorough in instruction.

I believe the influence of keeping Registers to be good. They tend to diminish absences and tardiness. We have truly an enormous number now; but the reason it seems so great is, it is placed before us in figures which tell the whole truth.

The practice of "boarding around" is dying out with us, I think; the manner of boarding teachers by putting them to the lowest bidder should die also, and be buried with the other.

B. L. FOSTER, Dummerston.

Our schools the past year have been more than usually successful. More efficient teachers have been employed, and the schools generally have been well managed. Obedience to wholesome discipline has been enforced; consequently the general aspect of affairs in and around the school house has been improved.

Among the evils we have to contend against is a disposition on the part of the people to require Prudential Committees to procure cheap teachers. The most capable and energetic persons are very generally driven from the profession to some other which offers better inducements and higher rewards. This practice is degrading our schools, and is one which must be reformed before our schools can be made what they should be.

Parents often do wrong in inculcating the idea that a school can be so conducted as to suit the particular caprices of children, without impairing and destroying the usefulness of the school. Teachers must govern and control, and scholars must obey; and any parent who would reverse this order is doing material injury to the children, and the school is affected by such an influence. "Teachers' Institutes" are valuable to teachers because they constitute the principle means they enjoy for becoming acquainted with the best modes of teaching, and also for comprehending the arduous and responsible duties of their vocation.

School Registers have been very carefully kept, and they have become acceptable and indispensable. Perhaps at some future day it may be thought best to consider the justness of dividing our school money exactly upon the present basis.

It is certainly a wise thing to stop the practice of "boarding around". I have no doubt the change will be well received here, though, ludicrously enough, one of our districts has voted to send their teacher to board with those persons who own Real Estate in said district, living either in or out of said district, in proportion to their respective grand lists. I hope this folly will teach them a little practical wisdom. On the whole, I trust our progress is not altogether of the retrograde order. Our town has voted to publish our next annual report of town Superintendent; which is pleasing to me, as indicative of a better appreciation of these labors.

SAMUEL PHELPS, Grafton.

As I am obliged to leave town for a few weeks, I will, at this early date, make a few brief suggestions pertaining to the schools in this town, leaving Mr. Fowler to fill the blank you send for me.

I have visited most of the schools in this town, twice each term; and while I have seen very many defects in them, my impressions, on the whole, are favorable. In most instances a wise selection has been made of teachers, under whose training are worked great improvements. Still I painfully feel that the standard of our education is by far too low. There is much that might be remedied by the people; and if by kind words and gentle means they cannot and will not be persuaded, then more stringent laws should be enacted, and vigorously enforced. It is now 10 years until this year since any report has been made, to the town meeting, of our schools. Is there no law whose penalty is severe enough to make our superintendents do the work better than this? I believe they should not be entitled to one cent for their services, until they fulfil the letter of the law in every particular.

Then, I believe, if these reports were printed, and widely circulated in the town, so that every parent and every child could see just the effects contrasted, of employing good and bad teachers, they would be more careful in their choice. Many times this is a delicate matter for the Superintendent to handle, who may be almost forced by circumstances to act against his convictions, when a teacher's learning is sufficient.

Then, another bad defect in some of our schools, is a want of the right kind of books, or having as many books of the same kind by as many different authors. For scholars of the same grade I have counted 4 scholars of the same age and attainments, in 4 different classes in Arithmetic or Geography. This is a shame and disgrace to parents, and especially to those who plead the excuse that books cost so much when they themselves are spending every month as much as the books would cost in worse than needless luxuries. It is hardly possible for the Superintendent to remedy this evil. I said one day to a little boy in school without a book, does your father chew tobacco? Yes. You tell him from me to leave it off for a month, or chew less, and thus save his money to purchase you a book. That remark gave offence, and did no good; and so it will be in almost all cases. What shall we do, when parents do not see how much *valuable* time teacher and pupils waste in this way; or if they do see, will not remedy the evil?

I believe it should be time, as in the State of Maine, laws should be vigorously enforced by State authorities, compelling every person to buy such books as are needed, or have them furnished by the State and they taxed for the value of them.

S. A. BLAKE, Halifax.

* * * You ask my opinion of the recent enactment terminating the practice of "boarding around", and how it is received in our vicinity. It has not been our practice of late to apportion the expense of teachers' board upon the scholar. Indeed I do not know of a district in town where all the expenses incurred for the support of schools have not been defrayed, for some time past, by a tax upon the grand list

of the district. Of course then the enactment to which you refer met with no opposition among us. And why should it? Have not our teachers and schools suffered enough already from the practice of "boarding around"? For a hundred years the teacher has wandered about, with no "fixed habitation", changing boarding places, on an average, once in three days; breakfasting very early, and breakfasting very late, and just when it happened; going with dinners warm, and dinners cold, and going with none; supping early, and supping late; living in families herbivorous, families carnivorous, and families omnivorous; retiring to bed early, and retiring late; following suit in eating and sleeping; shivering to slumber in cold rooms and "spare" beds, and sowing the seeds of disease and of premature death, which have sprung up and borne fruit. Is it not time he "boarded in one place"? I think it is. In school every thing depends upon the teacher; and whatsoever impairs his health, strength and energy, injures the school; and its influence upon the school is felt and seen as quick as that of bad ventilation. That the practice of "boarding around" has impaired the health and usefulness of our teachers, and injured our schools, I consider certain; and therefore regard the enactment to which you refer as a step in the right direction.

E. M. TORREY, Jamaica.

With regard to the condition of the schools I have but little to say. There seems to be a lack of interest with a large portion of the people in town, to do any thing to help advance the interest of schools, except to simply pay their taxes. They think it the duty of superintendents and teachers to do the rest. But still I think the town has been favored with a better class of teachers, and the schools have been better supported than at any time since my connection with them.

The law providing teachers with a steady boarding place is, in my opinion, a good law, and I think favorably received by a majority of the people in this vicinity.

I have attended several Teachers' Institutes, and think them productive of much good, and should be continued.

ORSON H. COPELAND, Marlboro.

* * * I would say a word, however, in regard to the discipline in our schools; even in those we call our best the order is not what it should be, but there is much room for improvement. The question is, how is it to be done? Though there is great difference in teachers in regard to their power to govern a school, it does not depend on them alone whether the school is as it should be; it needs the faithful co-operation of parents. They should send their children to school with the imperative command to behave well, and give the teacher as little trouble as possible. And parents should say and do nothing in the hearing of their children to weaken their confidence in, or respect for their teacher. With the faithful co-operation of parents, any one who knows enough to keep school may have some good degree of success; when a want of sympathy and co-operation with the teacher will discourage, and in a great measure, defeat the best efforts of the most experienced and best qualified teacher, who under different circumstances would be the most successful.

One thing more is very desirable, an effort to secure a better attendance; the Registers are too much defaced; parents should understand that this is a pecuniary loss; this is an argument some will feel more than any other.

I think very highly of the "Institutes", I hope we shall have one at Fayetteville before a great while. I have heard nothing said in reference to the change of "boarding around", but I think the practice should be abandoned.

BENJAMIN OBER, Newfane.

With regard to "boarding around", I would say that it was discontinued in this town several years ago; therefore we are glad to see that it is to become a general thing throughout the State.

During the past year our schools have been taught exclusively by females, and compare favorably with any in the past. Two of the miserable buildings called school houses have been replaced by substantial and pleasant ones, neatly and tastefully fitted up. The simple mention of this will be sufficient to show that our people are taking more interest in our schools.

It seems to me that the appropriation for Teachers' Institutes is altogether too small, and an effort ought to be made to have it increased, as well as the compensation to superintendents.

H. D. HOLTON, Putney.

**** I have never attended one of the Teachers' Institutes; but am confident that they are highly important and useful, inasmuch as they tend to increase the interest in our schools.

The improvement in our schools will never be more rapid, until the interest in them is increased. The Annual Report of the Secretary of the Board of Education is very interesting, yet not as useful as it should be; for few ever read it, and the superintendent reports do not accomplish what they ought, because they are not printed and sent into every family. Our *mothers* should see them, for they would be more prompt to act upon any suggestion they might contain. I have heard no fault found with the enactment requiring the whole expense of our schools to be defrayed by a tax upon the grand list.

E. O. LEE, Vernon.

Whatever defect there may have been in the schools of this town, I think it more chargeable to the parents than to the teachers. We have been blessed with good teachers, summer and winter. There have been many instances of tardiness,—altogether too many; but this should be corrected by the parents, or by the efforts of parents and teachers combined. It is a fact well known that children who are properly disciplined at home are generally well behaved at school; and that those who are not are apt to give the teacher trouble. All of the cases in town which I have known of ill-behaved scholars have been of this class. There have been six visits of prudential committees in town during the year: four of these were in one district, and two in another. Five of the schools have not been visited by their committees at all. I recommend that they take more interest in the matter, and render to the teacher what aid and encouragement they can. I find it much to the advantage of the schools to have the same teacher through several terms.

The growing favor of public examinations reported from this town, last year, the present Superintendent has not been able to see. On the whole, I believe the schools in good condition. Some repairs have been made on school houses, but many more are needed. More and better furniture could be added to most of them to great advantage.

SILAS KETCHUM, Wardsboro.

"Boarding around" I regard as a bad practice,—bad for the teacher, district and all concerned. The law requiring it to stop is just and wise, in my opinion. All the districts in town, except two, had abolished the practice before the law was passed; there will be some complaint about the law in these two districts, though generally it is well received by the people of this town.

A. STEVENS, Westminster.

To show you my opinion on the Annual Reports, I will copy the concluding part of my last year's report, read in the March meeting.

"In conclusion I would urge all to read with attention the Annual Report of the Secretary of the Vermont Board of Education. In addition to much valuable information, it contains in full the school laws of the State, with which all who have an interest in our common schools ought to be acquainted."

From what I have learned of the objects and manner of conducting Teachers' Institutes, I am decidedly in favor of them, and think they ought to be encouraged.

I think the number of leaves in the Registers might be reduced one-third, and some considerable expense. The enactment terminating the practice of 'boarding around' is not very well received in my district; I am not able to say how it is received in other districts. You will see by the returns that boarding around is the universal practice in this town, and as far as I know, it always has been, though it has been attended with some inconveniences. If the new law should reduce or remove them, the people will submit to it; if not, they will seek a modification of it. At present I am inclined to approve the law as an experiment.

AMHERST LAMB, Whitingham.

The teachers in this town have been nearly all females for the past year, there being only three males employed.

The teachers have generally been retained through the year, and the schools have been much more successful than in previous years. The teachers have been required to board 'around' in too many cases, and the pay has not been in proportion to the services. The average of teachers wages has been only \$2.41 per week.

The recent enactment terminating the practice of "boarding around", I think, will meet with approval in this vicinity; the people will see the wisdom of the law, and give our teachers what they should have had long ago, a steady boarding place.

CHARLES C. HASKELL, Wilmington.

I think that teachers generally fail to comprehend the importance of improving the *inventive* faculties of their pupils. Quite too much reliance is placed upon the rules and directions given in our text books. It is true that the labors of the school room are thus rendered comparatively easy for both teacher and scholars; but the benefits that would be obtained if the student was forced to more originality of thought are also comparatively lost. While the teacher, in the performance of his duty, is bound to assist his pupil to cultivate to a certain extent his powers of imitation, still more is it his duty so to direct his thoughts that each may add to science from the hidden springs of knowledge. Well may the *Green Mountain State* point with honest pride to the few first years of its history as a time when a new *impetus* was given to *learning*. Still there is much room for genius yet to clear the path of science, and to present its truths to the opening intellect in the plainest and most attractive forms.

WILLIAM PIERCE, Andover.

It is my opinion that the school Registers furnish a vast amount of information that we could procure in no other way,—information that is invaluable, and of which the State has been long deprived, because it had no way of furnishing. The Registers are becoming very popular in town.

Money that is expended for Teachers' Institutes could not be better expended. Teachers who attend them teach much better schools. Nothing could give me greater satisfaction in regard to our school law than the abandonment of 'boarding around'. I believe there was no other way to reach it than by an "act of the Legislature"; just as long as it was left to districts, the teacher was compelled to "board around." But now we hope for better things.

L. N. BOYDEN, Barnard.

I can not make my Report to you *perfect* so long as the Registers are *imperfect*; but as I look back on past years, when a well-kept Register was an exception to the general rule, I am encouraged in my efforts, and have faith that our reports will be more accurate in the future.

In regard to the *Teachers' Institutes* I have the same opinion as I expressed in my last year's report. I believe they have a very beneficial effect on our schools,

by making our teachers acquainted with better methods of imparting instruction and governing our schools.

I most heartily endorse the action of our Legislature in prohibiting that disagreeable, inconvenient and health destroying custom of "boarding around". This one act is enough to stamp that Legislature with wisdom. It will be hailed with feelings of joy by every one who has ever, or will ever teach in the State. I have heard no one of our townsmen speak unfavorably of it, but have heard many approve of it. I believe it will prove a very wise and popular enactment for our school system.

Finally, Mr. Secretary, allow me to express my satisfaction with your Annual Report: I have read it with much interest and profit. I am not sure but it would be a good thing, if the Legislature should pass a law that every legal voter in the State should read it. (or have it read to him in case he cannot read) as an indispensable requisite of exercising his franchise. At any rate, I hope all the district clerks and teachers will read it and ponder its timely words, so that we may all be better prepared for our respective duties; and thus aid in carrying forward the great and good work of public education.

S. A. PARKER, Bethel.

The enactment terminating the practice of "boarding around" is received with general approbation in this town, and I think in this vicinity.

H. CLOSSON, Cavendish.

Having frequently urged upon the people of Chester the importance of a careful perusal of the Secretary's Report, I am pleased to be able to state that many of our people are anxious to see the Secretary's Annual Report, and they peruse it with the interest usually shown at the reception of "Harper's".

The "boarding around" system had generally been abandoned in this town prior to the enactment terminating the practice.

Z. G. HARRINGTON, Chester.

The school Registers are accomplishing a most valuable purpose. They are an important, perhaps an essential instrument for the advancement of the schools. As a source of statistical information they appear to be indispensable. But it is only to a limited extent that they accomplish their object: they are in so many instances so poorly kept! So far, however, as my experience goes, the fault is with the district clerks rather than with the teachers. The page of questions to be answered by the clerks is the one on which the greater part of the deficiencies, and the difficulties in the way of correct returns, are found. It is impossible that these returns should be of any great value until the clerks learn to discharge their duties better. As it is, they leave the facts as to some of the more important points to be guessed at by the superintendents, or to be arrived at from very dubious and insufficient data. As an example of discrepancy arising from this source, take the following on this schedule. From the Registers we derive, as the whole amount expended for teachers' wages, board and fuel, \$1987.46. The items by which this amount is made up amount to \$1666.22; the discrepancy is \$421.24. The value of such statistics cannot be very great, and yet they cost as much labor to gather them as they would if they were correct. Can nothing be done to give the clerks a jog on this subject? Unless the Registers are accurately kept, *we labor in vain, and spend our strength for naught*. The Registers tell too true a story in regard to the amount of tardiness in attendance. The revelation is sufficiently astounding and mortifying, but it ought nevertheless to be made; and there is no way of making it but by the Register. The evil prevails most in the village schools. About two-thirds of the more than 3000 tardinesses recorded against the schools in this town, are due to two village districts. The shame calls aloud for a rebuke and a remedy! The statistics of this town reveal the surprising and somewhat disheartening fact that the race of children among us is getting greatly reduced, if it is not running out. We have 248

families, and only 420 children of school age,—but a fraction more than one to a family. The question arises what hope can we have of any great improvement in the schools under such a state of things? The first step towards any thing like general and permanent improvement would seem to be *reorganization*. Unite and enlarge the districts; throw together a greater number of scholars, and a greater amount of money in the same district. Then we may hope that something of the old interest and the old prosperity may return.

The recent enactment placing the expense of schools entirely on the Grand List is eminently just, and experience will greatly demonstrate its practical wisdom. It is already, to say the least, silently acquiesced in. At all events I have heard no complaints against it. It puts the support of the public schools upon the true basis, the property of the community, and requires every man to contribute according to his ability, and not according to the number of his children.

There is no one thing in my judgment that is productive of so much good to the school interest as the faithful reports of the Superintendents. Improvement is almost always found following close upon the heels of a good, searching, discriminating town report.

A. G. PEASE, Norwich.

It is somewhat gratifying while gathering statistical facts from the school Registers, as kept by the teachers and clerks of the several districts, to find the proof of the moral and intellectual improvement that is going on constantly and steadily in the schools, as shown by these facts, facts which cannot be controverted.

In the report of the school in this town, for the year 1861, it appears that the number of families was 277, and in 1865 it was 258; showing a decrease of about seven and one-half per cent, in the four years. The whole number of scholars between the ages of four and eighteen in 1861, was 439, and in 1865, 380; showing a decrease of 13½ per cent. In 1861 the aggregate average attendance of scholars between the ages of four and twenty was 218, and in 1865, 208; showing a decrease of only 4½ per cent, making an increase as compared with the whole number of 9 per cent.

The whole number of instances of corporeal punishment in 1861, was 80, while in 1865 there was not a single instance of its infliction in all the schools in town. This higher moral culture, and increased attention to mental improvement is also plainly observable to any one whose duty it has been during the same time, to visit and inspect the progress and improvement of the schools; and it is the more to be regarded, as the attention of the country has during all this period, been so earnestly called to other and important subjects. Though much of the knowledge of the schools can be gained by observation and inspection, yet it is by means of the school Registers, kept as they are, though yet imperfectly by those having the immediate charge of the school: that we arrive at positive facts in relation to all school statistics, and they cannot now be dispensed with.

With regard to the recent enactment of our State Legislature, one object of which is, to terminate the practice of requiring teachers to "board around," we regard it as one of the most judicious and useful of the present school laws, if it will serve the purpose intended; but if by this enactment, the teacher is to be made the collector of a scanty pittance of a board tax, raised on the Grand List of the district, then one of the objects of our Legislature, and the friends of education will be defeated. But the practice will not continue long, under the present growing interest in our school affairs, and districts will soon learn, that teachers can be as profitably employed in the school-room, as in being compelled to assist the collector in his official duties.

For the further improvement in schools, I would urge, as I have often done

before, a higher standard of qualifications in teachers. It is true that too many of the teachers of the common schools do not keep pace with the increasing wants of the scholars. It is too late for any young man or woman to think, that being able "*to do all the hard sums in Arithmetick*" is the only requisite for a successful teacher. A heart and soul devoted to the work, a thorough knowledge of all the principles to be taught, a somewhat thorough acquaintance with educational works and of the different methods of teaching the several branches of school study; and an acquaintance with the works of some of the standard authors of the past and present centuries; are essential requisites to success in teaching.

Prudential Committees are not, in many cases, sufficiently careful in employment of teachers. Looking to the pecuniary affairs of the district, and rarely visiting the schools, they are not aware of the increasing interest in the school-room.

HOSEA DOTON, Pomfret.

In regard to the school Registers, Teachers' Institutes and Annual Reports, it is very evident that they tend to increase the interest in common school education; yet very many of our good people are slow to see and appreciate the beneficial results arising therefrom.

In relation to the recent enactment, terminating the practice of "boarding around," I can give my hearty approval. I think it will be well received generally; at present, but very few know anything about it.

I think that the compensation of Superintendents is by far too limited. In these times it will scarcely pay the "horse hire," to say nothing of the time and trouble. It is hoped that this pecuniary evil will soon be remedied.

H. M. TAYLOR, Reading.

* * * The recent enactment for the support of schools on the Grand List, and thus doing away with the long established practice of "boarding around" appears to meet with very general satisfaction.

PHILETUS CLARK, Sharon.

It seems to me like "carrying coal to Newcastle," to attempt to show the utility of keeping school Registers, or of the Institutes.

In money matters, joint stock companies require their agents to keep a record of their doings. The school is an enterprise in which every man has an investment, whether he knows it or not. The register is a kind of a pulse thermometer, indicating at once to the eye the internal condition. Without the statistics afforded by them, we cannot rise to any accurate general idea of the real needs of our schools; thus they furnish the safest guide in legislation and to individual effort.

As to the Institutes, I have never heard but one opinion in regard by those who are qualified to judge. If any one doubts their usefulness, it must be that they have never attended one, or do not appreciate the fact that the majority of our teachers need instruction in the practical part of their business. There are men so bound to custom that any innovation seems injurious; they incline to reject everything which age has not made venerable; such men talk about the schools "when they were boys," the value of which they often cite as bright examples; to them the school laws, Superintendents, Institutes, &c,—are "useless machinery." I have found however, but few of this class, in the circle of my observation.

The good results of the Institutes are generally admitted, they ought to be longer, and held oftener.

Boarding on the scholar has not been practiced in this town, except in one or two districts, for some time. Some of the districts sell the board by the week,

which often gives the teacher three or four different boarding places during the term. I think the people generally intend to give the teacher a pleasant home. I have found that the Prudential Committees do not in all cases entertain a very high idea of the value of a teacher; they hire a person to teach a week, for about what a washwoman earns in a day; that they sometimes get a good teacher in their undeserved good luck.

Shall a Superintendent refuse a certificate to those who engage to teach for the trifling salary bestowed on many of our teachers. This question has suggested itself to me, when asked for a certificate which I felt was not deserved, and usually procured what the examination could not have done. But if a district will allow their committee to employ a teacher at such prices as many do, they ought to be cursed with a poor school. We have had some excellent schools during the year, and others of quite the opposite character.

One good house has been built during the year, but a dozen more are needed. If the farmers would take half the interest in the moral and intellectual improvement of their children that they do in the improvement of their sheep, and provide school-houses for their children, as comfortable as their barns are for their flocks, they would take a long step in the right direction. Our village districts are favorably situated for the establishment of a Union School, but the academy divides the force which would otherwise establish one. I think the interests of the town demand the Union School.

This is the first year that I have had charge of the schools. I can but feel that if the patrons of the schools would labor as zealously in their sphere, as do the teachers, poorly qualified as many are, a great change for the better would follow.

F. F. PARKER, Springfield.

In complying with the above request, I would say, that the *teachers* have kept the Registers in a manner highly creditable to themselves, but the *district clerks* have failed in their duty, sadly: and in three instances, at least, the Selectmen should have withheld the share of the public money, but they did not. I believe the influence of Teachers' Institutes for the good of our schools is second to none; I wish we might be favored with one in this vicinity. Why cannot the State make an appropriation for the Institutes which shall be worthy the good faith and energy of the Green Mountain State.

I also believe in the utility of the Annual Reports, and if all the citizens of the State would read them, much more good would result from them.

I fully endorse the action of the Legislature in abolishing the practice of boarding on the scholar. No district in this town has defrayed any part of the expense of schools by a tax on the scholar, for many years, and of course the law was favorably received here. The citizens are gradually becoming more and more interested in our schools. They are making efforts to procure better teachers, and to improve the sad condition of some of our houses. Although but little has been done in this respect during the year, yet, the prospect is, that more will be done the present year, and our houses be put in better condition for the purpose they were intended. I hope and trust that our State will continue in well-doing until *Vermont* shall be able to boast of a school system second to none in the country.

JUSTUS DART, Weathersfield.

There is no difference of opinion among intellectual and thoughtful men in our community, as to the efficient instrumentality of Teachers' Institutes and other educational provisions of our school laws, in securing that growing interest and marked progress in our public schools, which, notwithstanding the public attention has been largely absorbed by our national difficulties is very generally manifest.

The justice and propriety of the recent enactment of the Legislature terminating the practice of "boarding around," upon which you ask an expression of opinion, are so obvious, that it cannot fail of securing the approval of all true friends of education. The practice of defraying any part of the expense attending district schools by tax on the scholar, was abandoned by all the districts in this town long ago. It has been the practice, however, of some districts to apportion the board by the Grand List, and to require the teachers to board with all the tax payers in the district; but this method is giving way to the better one of leaving it with the prudential committee to provide board for the teacher.

JOSEPH C. FENN, Weston.

Our schools are progressing finely. The past year having been one of improvement and prosperity.

J. N. STILES, Windsor.

As to the recent enactment terminating the practice of "boarding around," my own opinion is that it is to be taken as a hopeful sign of progressive civilization among us. I have always thought all the expense of our public schools should be defrayed by a tax on the Grand List. And my objections have not been merely theoretical and abstract. I have seen so many instances when the old law has been detrimental and almost ruinous to particular schools, that I rejoice greatly that I am to see no more of the jars and quarrels, and no more of the injustice which the old law often produces.

I think the new enactment is received with general favor, I have heard no complaint but many expressions of gratification.

I think our great educational need now, is a Normal School for the training of teachers for the special business of teaching. Our Academies do not give them this training. We want teachers who know how to teach well the *elements* of Reading, Spelling, Writing, Geography, Arithmetic and Grammar. We need teachers who know how to make a profitable and interesting exercise for a class in reading a single simple sentence; and who realize that the test of scholarship is not the number of books *devoured*, but the thoroughness with which a little knowledge is digested and assimilated.

I would like to mention one other need. We ought to have a truant school, so that the many vagrant children who wander about our streets in idleness shall be forced either to attend the common district school, or be sent to a school designed for their special benefit; and that those vicious boys, who will soon be in the State Prison unless the saving hand is reached out to them in some shape, may be sent to a better place than the prison. It would be a saving to the State of thousands of dollars, and of untold moral wealth.

MOSES MARSTON, Woodstock.

STATISTICAL AGGREGATE FOR 1864-'65.

Number of heads of families.....	57,787
“ “ children between the ages of 4 and 18 years	88,453
“ “ weeks of school taught by males,.....	8,729
“ “ “ “ “ “ females,.....	54,555
Amount of wages paid to male teachers,.....	\$51,960
“ “ “ “ female “.....	\$143,553
“ paid for board of teachers,.....	\$123,002
“ “ “ fuel, furniture and incidentals,	\$45,611
“ “ “ erecting school-houses,.....	\$43,604
“ “ “ repairing school-houses,.....	13,161
“ of Public Money distributed in 1864,.....	103,770
“ raised on Grand List,.....	\$160,615
“ “ “ the scholar,.....	\$58,598
“ paid for wages, board and fuel,.....	\$334,349
Number of weeks school supported by tax,.....	31,088
Average number of voters attending school meeting,.....	12
Number of Registers required,.....	2,940
“ “ different teachers employed,.....	4,620
“ “ private and select schools,.....	261
“ attending private and select schools,.....	7,294
“ of weeks of board and fuel levied upon the scholar,	24,492
Aggregate average attendance of scholars between	
4 and 20.....	44,628
Whole No. of scholars between 4 and 18 attending school,	64,042
“ “ “ “ 18 and 20 attending school,	2,183
“ “ “ instances of tardiness,.....	673,029
“ “ “ “ dismissal,.....	87,661
Number of scholars having no absences,	7,210
“ “ instances of corporal punishment,.....	5,618
“ “ visits by Superintendents,	6,009
“ “ “ “ Prudential Committees,.....	2,754
“ “ “ by others,.....	40,927
“ “ scholars studying Reading,.....	61,654
“ “ “ “ Spelling,.....	60,480
“ “ “ “ Penmanship,.....	28,734
“ “ “ “ Arithmetic,.....	40,006
“ “ “ “ Eng. Grammar,.....	12,936
“ “ “ “ Geography,.....	25,370
“ “ “ “ Composition,.....	5,826
“ “ “ “ History,.....	2,553
“ “ “ “ Other Studies,.....	3,233

Number of Dictionaries in the Common Schools,.....	108
“ “ Globes “ “.....	188
“ “ Maps “ “.....	298
“ “ Clocks, “ “.....	125
“ “ Thermometers, “ “.....	86
“ “ teachers that have taught school previously,..	8,308
“ “ “ “ “ in same district before,	988
“ “ “ boarding “ around,”.....	3,049
“ “ “ teaching without certificates,.....	57
“ “ legally organized School districts,.....	24,22
“ “ fractional districts,	224
“ “ districts having no school during the year,....	107
“ “ districts voting to have no school,.....	21
Amount of Superintendents bills as claimed,.....	\$45,56
Number of Districts not filing Registers,.....	224
“ “ Superintendent’s Reports printed,.. .	17
“ “ Academies,.....	68

Such is the Statistical summary for the past year, and it is a matter of regret that still the same complaint, so often made before, must again be heard, that owing to the very general failure to perceive the indispensable importance of facts accurately ascertained and reported in a reliable and intelligible manner, as the only really valuable foundation of a correct theory of education, as well as the only satisfactory test of its working capacity, it sometimes seems to be almost impossible to secure the statistical data which are required. The statistical schedules were distributed in the month of March, so as at once to be at hand in time for the returns required to be made in April, and not to be received so long before the time when needed as to be forgotten. But although repeatedly written to, quite a number of Superintendents have made no return at all during the year, and several have been so dilatory that their returns have been of no value whatever; and in several instances I have been obliged to write several times after the receipt of the returns in order to secure necessary corrections, and sometimes have been compelled to rely upon returns of former years, or information received from private individuals, after all efforts to obtain the facts had failed. When this difficulty arises from the negligence of Superintendents, it is inexcusable, for men appointed to this important and responsible office can scarcely offer the excuse of ignorance. But an examination of the abstracts from the returns of the Superinten-

dents show that while occasionally teachers are at fault in the right discharge of their duties in properly filling out the Registers, it is the district clerks to whom most of the blame is attributed. An inspection of the School Registers on file in the various town clerk's offices shows that in very many instances men are chosen to the office of clerk of the district that are utterly incompetent to the decent and proper discharge of its sometimes difficult and always important duties. To keep accurately and properly the record of the doings of an independent corporation like a school district, to warn its meetings and to fully discharge the statistical duties required by law, are matters that require some degree of intelligence, and to do all well, requires no little skill and experience. On this account the too prevalent custom of selecting inexperienced boys who know absolutely nothing of the proper methods of transacting the operations of ordinary business, to fill the office of district clerk should be discountenanced by the good sense of every community. Such persons must fail, of course; and the consequences of a general failure here are often quite serious. It is probably true that nine of every ten of the complicated suits at law arise out of school district quarrels, which are notoriously among the most expensive and most disastrous of all legal contests,—grow out of illegal warnings, or insufficient records of school meetings. And, as we have seen, the failure to obtain entirely reliable statistical information in regard to the schools, comes mainly from the same source. But these facts, however intrinsically insignificant individual details may seem, are, as a whole, of incalculable value. A system of school laws, like a system of poor laws, or of probate laws, or of laws in regard to highways, never did, and never will spring at once into perfect adaptation to the wants of a community. And in the one case as in the others, perfection comes by growth, and never by creation and instantaneously. This is emphatically true of systems of education, itself the organic power and active agent by which the very progressive nature of humanity itself must be developed, if at all. A school system having any perfectness of adaptation to the wants of the community for which it was intended, can only have attained it by having from time to time incorporated into, and made a part of its original plan, such modifications and improvements as its actual operation may have suggested as necessary to its progressively increasing adaptation to the demands of successive periods of time; and what these demands may be, can only be ascertained by a

careful and long continued observation of the facts attending the every day operation of such system.

A school system may be theoretically constructed so as to meet any conceivable exigency and necessity, and seem to be so perfect in its adaptation to every want, that its success may be counted upon with absolute certainty; and when this apparently perfect machinery is put into operation, it may notoriously fail to accomplish its legitimate and proper object. No human power, by mere inspection of the theoretic organism of a system of education can, with any tolerable accuracy, predict its success or failure. It must be tried; it must be set to the performance of its own legitimate work of gathering together the children of the community and giving them efficient instruction in necessary and proper directions. If a system fails to collect a fair proportion of the children,—if it fails to preserve their health, to develop body, heart and mind with the rapidity and certainty that is known to be attainable; if it fails to impress a conviction of its own commanding importance upon the minds of the citizens, and secure their hearty sympathy and co-operation; if it gradually lose the respect of the community and sink into neglect and contempt, and, the interest of the parents being alienated, children desert the public schools for private schools; if for the amount of expenditure which it requires, it imparts only an insufficient and insignificant amount of moral and mental culture; then such school system is nothing better than a failure. Hence it is only by observation of the facts attending the operation of a system of schools that a correct opinion can be formed as to its capacity, or that a reliable judgment can be formed as to the measures necessary to be adopted in order to increase its efficiency and purge away its faults.

Herein consists the incalculable consequence of a correct and reliable report of the facts in regard to the schools of a State. A study of facts, and an annual comparison of results, are the only available means of securing the gradual and progressive improvement of the schools. Without these, the work of improvement becomes mere guess-work, and can have no satisfactory measure of certainty and reliability whatever. These conclusions, so palpably true, make it exceeding strange that there should still be such a sort of indifference or latent, and indeed sometimes open, opposition on the part of citizens, to all practical measures intended to secure accurate statistical returns in regard to our schools. And the frequency of complaints

that abound in every section of the State that "Educational men are all dreamers"—and that "more of humbug and mere theory is connected with the advocacy of educational reform than with any other enterprise,"—all make it still more strange that every body should not with the utmost cheerfulness and care be willing to co-operate in the effort to relieve educational discussions from all tendency to humbug, by securing that reliable knowledge of facts which will immediately reduce all educational effort to the utmost attainable practicability.

The State of Vermont is comparatively a small one, and yet her expenditure annually for schools, is nearly half a million of dollars; and this consideration alone, to say nothing of a thousand higher and nobler reasons, would seem sufficient to vindicate the propriety of providing with all necessary care and labor, those essential facts that can alone furnish the data for valuable thought and discussion, or a safe basis for sound and wholesome legislation.

If the citizens generally fully appreciated the importance of correct statistical information, then public sentiment would concur with the law in making so strong a demand for a faithful discharge of the duties in reference to statistics by clerks, teachers and Superintendents, that little other effort would be necessary to secure entire statistical accuracy.

The proper keeping of the Register is one of the most important of the teacher's duties, and should not under any circumstances be neglected. Superintendents at the public examination of teachers, and on all occasions when visiting the schools, should impress the duty of exact statistical accuracy upon the teachers and all present; and the Selectmen should fulfil their duty under the law, and resolutely refuse to any district that neglects its duty in regard to the Registers, any share of the public money. Superintendents and citizens on visiting the schools should examine the Registers, and note carefully the style in which they are kept. By such course, Superintendents would much facilitate their own labors and relieve themselves of much of the irksome drudgery involved under prevalent habits, in examining and abstracting the School Registers for their annual reports.

The difficulties experienced in the effort to procure statistical facts are not at all peculiar to educational statistics. No one who has ever been called to labor in this field has failed to wonder at the extent to which his efforts have been unnecessarily embarrassed. From the census taker to

him who gathers the facts in reference to agriculture, religious societies, sabbath schools, or commercial transactions, all have had occasion to wonder at the apparent opposition of communities who are interested in and curious about the results to be obtained, to the operation of the means by which alone these results can be reached. And however annoying it may be, it is scarcely possible to restrain admiration at the ingenuity with which plain questions are often so answered as to convey no jot of the information that is desired. If a strict regard to the requirements of a division of labor is ever indispensable, it is in the collection of statistical information. Where some one must of necessity organize the system of interrogation, it would be nothing more than reasonable to suppose that he has arranged his questions in accordance with some certain plan, and desires plain and direct answers to his inquiries. And such categorical answers exhibit fully as much good sense as is shown in the curt, equivocal or smart responses sometimes received, which may exhibit the peculiar genius of him who replies, but certainly are of little service in any other way. That the collection of statistics involves a great amount of uninteresting and irksome labor on the part of teachers, clerks and superintendents, is undoubtedly true, but theirs is not, by any means, the heaviest burden of this description, and where they spend hours in this disagreeable work, another agency of the State is compelled to spend months.

All who have any interest in the schools, or who desire their permanent improvement, should remember that, without accurate knowledge of the statistics in regard to them, we must necessarily labor in the dark, with great uncertainty and very little prospect of success; and so all should unite in endeavoring to secure from all those that have any thing to do with the collecting and reporting of statistical facts, a full and faithful discharge of their various functions. To secure this, a more intelligent appreciation by the community of the value of correct statistics, and a greater degree of patience with unattractive and troublesome, but yet entirely indispensable instrumentalities by which the work can alone be accomplished, is exceedingly desirable; and this can only come from frequent and discriminating discussions.

When the citizens of the State generally become convinced of the importance of correct educational statistics, and look upon the careful keeping of the School Register as essential to the procurement of indispensable information, then the work

of improving the schools will be made much more plain and feasible.

TOWN SUPERINTENDENTS.

In natural connection with what has preceded, it seems not improper to call attention to the very great, and little heeded importance to the welfare of the schools, and through them, to the well being of the State, of a thoroughly faithful and efficient discharge of the manifold duties of the office of Town Superintendent of Schools. As a general fact, by far too little attention is given by the towns to the selection of persons best fitted to fill usefully and acceptably this important office.— When we consider that the Superintendent is required to examine every person proposing to teach in the public schools and determine without appeal as to his fitness or unfitness; to visit and examine carefully into the character and efficiency of the schools; to revoke the certificates of, and therefore, in effect, to dismiss, all incompetent and improper teachers; to advise with and direct the teacher as to methods of instruction and discipline; to consult and advise with committees, teachers and parents in regard to the character and success of the schools; to make a careful report to the annual town meeting concerning the progress of the mental and moral development of the whole town; and to report through the Secretary of the Board to the people at large, in regard to the success of the general provision made for the education of a whole people; we cannot fail to perceive that, as a class, the Town Superintendents, if their standing and the importance of their functions be measured by their possible power, through the influence which they may exert upon the young, to give direction and force to the tendencies that are moulding the character of the State, are filling no unimportant office. While it is true that, through the negligent indifference of the people themselves occasionally an unfit and incompetent person is selected to act as Superintendent, still there is good reason for congratulation that there should for many years, have been found in the discharge of the duties of their office an amount of faithfulness and capacity so much greater than the prevalent light estimation of the character of the office has deserved. To thoroughly examine the teachers of a town, and with anything like accuracy to distinguish them who ought from them who ought not to be allowed to take charge of the schools—to visit regularly the school and encourage and sustain the teacher,

inspire the scholars and judiciously advise the parents,—to truthfully and resolutely present to the citizens the condition of their schools as resulting from their own care or negligence,—all are neither easy nor agreeable duties, and require both judgment and nerve. Yet, in the effort to perform all these various functions, how little of consideration and sympathy is received from the citizens? And how common it is to elect the first person who happens to receive a nomination as Superintendent, without a moment's consideration as to his ability to perform his duties.

The compensation too that is given, and often grudgingly, to the Superintendent, bears no rational proportion to the difficulty or importance of the labor required. No labor whatever that is performed in the State receives so utterly insignificant a reward. If an able-bodied man during the past year had labored in chopping wood, he would have earned daily \$1.50—if in the hay or harvest field, \$1.75,—if summoned as a witness, \$1.00 and mileage,—if serving as a juror \$2.00 and mileage,—if serving as a commissioner, guardian, executor, &c., &c., \$2.00 and expenses,—but if he acts as Superintendent of Schools, according to law he can have but \$1.00 per day, and will be compelled to pay his own expenses. When a Superintendent has spent a day in visiting schools, an accurate account of his receipts and expenditures is ludicrously suggestive.—He has given his own time, which should be worth as much as though spent in chopping or threshing—say \$1.50; often he takes his own team or hires one at an expense say of \$1.50, and either buys his dinner or visits it out of some good natured inhabitant of the district, and receives for all the sum of \$1.00 current money of the United States. What wonder then that, with such estimation and such compensation, there should be less efficient supervision than is necessary. Yet with all this insufficiency of compensation, it is common to hear frequent complaints as to the enormous expense and little utility of the supervision given. The No. of districts in the State, whole and fractional, is 2,870; the whole amount of Superintendents' bills as claimed, is \$4,556, which gives \$1.58 as the average expense per district of the supervision actually received. No reasonable person, in view of the prices now paid for labor, whether skilled or unskilled, can consider this compensation thus actually paid, or claimed, for the supervision of the schools, as a very extravagant one.

Whether the existing system of supervision is the best that

can be had may well admit of much doubt. And our State may yet be compelled to follow the example of New York, and in the future go back to the plan of supervision by county Superintendents, both as more efficient and less expensive, and I have little doubt, that, if means could be given to secure the selection of proper agents and to give some degree of permanency to their tenure of office, a recurrence to the supervision by county Superintendents, such as prevailed in this State but a few years since, would be a change for the better.

However that might be, it is certain that we have within our power the means to add great efficiency to the supervision of our schools, with very slight modification of law. If the attention of all were given to this matter so that in the annual town meeting an effort should be made to elect the most competent man to the office of Superintendent, and then never to make an unnecessary change in the incumbency, but endorsing by a re-election the energy, skill and resolution of a faithful officer—a change of law by which if necessary towns should be empowered to increase the compensation of the Superintendents by vote, would, with an increase of interest on the part of the citizens, be all that we should require to double the efficiency of our schools.

NUMBER OF FAMILIES AND OF CHILDREN.

By the statistics of the year, it is gratifying to perceive that there has been an increase both in the number of families and of children of school age. The No. of families reported in 1863 was 56,070—in 1864 it was 57,000; and in the last year, 57,787. The No. of children of school age, i. e. between 4 and 18 years of age, in 1863 was 86,562—in 1864 it was 85,795, and in the last year it is 88,453. If the reports of succeeding years should continue to indicate an increase in the same direction, occasion will be given for most hearty satisfaction and congratulation. The rapid comparative diminution of children in the State for the last quarter of a century has filled the mind of many of our most intelligent and patriotic citizens with alarm. A mere diminution of the general population of the commonwealth, while the wealth and prosperity of the mass is constantly increasing, is a fact alarming enough of itself, but this is capable of explanation through emigration, a love of excitement or of mere change; and is somewhat compensated by the reflection that our loss may be the gain of some other portion

of our common country. But a statistical showing that proves beyond a doubt that without any prevalent disease, such is the disproportionate diminution of children in the State, that unless arrested, it must, in a comparatively short period result in the complete extinction of the native born population, ought to startle and arouse the careful and thoughtful consideration of every patriot. It is humiliating enough, and full enough of discouragement, to recognize the State of Vermont, as far as population is concerned, as the least progressive State in the whole Union, and to know that, by the last census, our own State is shown to have gained in population less than one-seventh as much as was gained by the State that, except our own, made the least advance that was made by any one of the sisterhood of states; but it is to the thoughtful still more painful to know that, however this strange halting and lingering in the progressive march may be partially accounted for by emigration, by want of room, or a thousand other reasons, it is perfectly manifest that a disproportionate diminution of children is a far more reliable and still more alarming cause.

That such a phase of the great topic of the growth and development of the commonwealth is not specially appropriate in an educational report, is probably true; but it is equally true that whatever strikes at the very possibility of State growth and power is appropriate wherever thoughtful and patriotic men consult together for the common welfare. Such a condition, upon the slightest consideration, will be found to indicate the prevalence of a disregard of the highest and holiest social obligations, and of a calculating sensuousness approaching to the brutal that deserves and should receive the marked and decided as well as out-spoken reprobation of every citizen. And no possible remedy can be found except in discussion. In universal silence may and will be founded a claim of universal sanction. The subject is of so delicate a nature, that few are willing to touch it before a secular assembly; and both pulpit and press have been silent so long, that no common degree of courage will sustain the person who broaches it.

By the Statistical Summary it will appear that in the State are 57,787 families, and in these families, 88,453 children between the ages of 4 and 18 years. This will give to each family a small fraction over $1\frac{1}{2}$. Had the poisonous breath of the pestilence swept over the land, or a famine or a conflagration deprived the people of the power comfortably to support their own families, less wonder would be excited by the facts repor-

ted. But a progressive increase of wealth and business, and all the means of comfort and happiness which has characterized Vermont till the measure of individual and average competence is scarcely equalled on the earth, gives no palliation for an avaricious selfishness that will persist in hoarding for the gratification of personal ostentation and indulgence, means abundantly sufficient to foster, support and educate a whole generation of vigorous and healthy children, in direct opposition as well to the instincts of human nature and natural affection, as to the promptings of an intelligent regard for public good.

One of the greatest existing delusions is the tendency always to be found as characteristic of an advanced state of civilization, to underestimate the value of manhood and womanhood as compared with wealth, position and social consideration. In the earlier and darker days of the late rebellion, when the Executive of the nation and his immediate advisers found themselves beset by rampant and exultant rebels, beleaguered in the very Capital of the republic, and cut off from all communication with their friends; after the almost despairing cry of the President for help; when amidst the gloom of a darkness that could be felt, the very foundations of the Government seemed to be crumbling and sinking; when with agonizing expectation and straining ears they listened for the steady tramp of the men of New England and New York, how verily mean and small seemed mere money and rank and social distinction by the side of men,—stalwart, patriotic and determined men!

If never before, then certainly since the experience of the last five years, it may be considered as demonstrated beyond the possibility of doubt, that the sure wealth of a nation is not in its money, houses and lands, stocks, mines and quarries, so much as in its true, strong and patriotic men.

Surely we may look once more at the figures, and however slight the advance may be, we may well be thankful that though times may be hard, and prices may be high and taxes heavy—still the children, the true hope and real wealth of the State, are increasing in number.

EXPENDITURE FOR SCHOOLS.

The school year to which the statistics of the present report are applicable closed on the 31st March, 1865; and when we take into consideration the length of time for which the war had endured, the sorrow and gloom which pervaded the whole

community, the many sacrifices which the people had been called upon to endure, and the heavy burdens of severe taxation and high prices, it could not have surprised any reasonable person if the extraordinary financial pressure from so many directions had operated to diminish the general outlay for the purpose of education. Neither would such a result, under the attending circumstances, have fairly evinced any diminution of interest in the cause of education.

It will be a matter of surprise to many, and of satisfaction to all, to know that not only is it not true that any such diminution of outlay has occurred, but on the other hand, it is shown that there has been quite a large increase of the amount of money expended in the legitimate support of schools during the year.

The leading expenditures for the previous year were as follows. For wages of male teachers, exclusive of board \$53,400; for female teachers \$110,191; for erecting School houses \$20,416; for repairing School houses \$11,198; for fuel, furniture and incidentals \$30,662; for Superintendents' bills as claimed, \$4,764.

By the returns for the last year, the year ending March 31st, 1865, the expenditures are as follows—For wages of male teachers \$51,960; wages of female teachers \$143,553; for erecting school houses \$43,604; for repairing school houses \$13,161; for fuel, furniture and incidentals, \$45,611; for Superintendents services, as claimed, \$4,556. Thus it appears that the aggregate expenditures for the year last past, for the various items enumerated, has been \$297,881, while for the year preceding it was \$225,867 for the same items.

The expenses of board for the previous year were so inaccurately returned that it was estimated for the number of weeks of school reported, at \$1,50 per week, and thus gave the aggregate expenses for the board of teachers as \$96,618. But the actual returns of the year last past show that the average price of board is within a small fraction of \$2,00 per week, and amounts to \$123,002. These figures will give the aggregate expense of the year last past for the special purposes mentioned as being \$420,891, while the aggregate of the preceding year was given as being \$327,249. If we correct the last aggregate by substituting for the estimated expense of board, the amount to which it would have reached at the price of board as ascertained during the present year, it will be \$258,073. After this correction, the aggregate for the items given will be

for the year last past \$297,881 against \$258,073 for the preceding year, showing that the expenditure for the last year exceeds that of the preceding year by \$39,808.

An examination of the abstracts from the reports of the various Superintendents will furnish the evidence that will convince even doubters of the progressive and decided improvement of the general character of the schools; but the evidence given in the figures just quoted is a thousand times more convincing than any more descriptive statement, or positive assertion can be. That in the midst of an engrossing pre-occupation of the general mind, and when oppressed with an overwhelming anxiety about national affairs of paramount importance, the good people of the State should not only not have diminished their usual contributions for the support of the common schools, but should have actually increased by some \$40,000 their appropriations for the education of their children, and this while absolute necessity in the prosecution of the necessary avocations of life had largely diminished the attendance of the children upon the schools is evidence of an increasing interest in schools and of appreciation of the importance of general education of the most conclusive and satisfactory description.

DURATION OF THE SCHOOLS.

To one accustomed to study educational statistics, the facts in regard to the duration of the schools are among the most interesting and significant to which attention can be given. Unimportant apparently and generally regarded as of little consequence, they are always full of matter that deserves and will repay thoughtful consideration and discussion. The number of weeks of school by male teachers reported for the present year—by which is meant the year closing March 31st, 1865, and the year to which the present report applies—is 8,729; the number of weeks of school by female teachers is 54,555, and the aggregate number of weeks is 63,284. The number of weeks of school by male teachers reported for the preceding year was 10,413 and of weeks of school by females was 53,999 giving an aggregate number of weeks of 64,412. Thus the aggregate number of weeks of school for the present year falls short of the aggregate of the preceding year by the number of 1128 weeks. The significance of this discrepancy is affected somewhat by another fact, viz., that the number of districts re-

ported varies in the two years reported. The whole number of districts,—whole and fractional, reported for the present year is 2646 while the number of districts reported for the preceding year was 5,682. There then appears during the present year a decrease of 36 in the whole number of districts, a decrease which, as indicative of an advance in the direction of consolidation, is a promising indication of progress.

From these figures it is ascertained that the average duration of the common schools for the last year was 24,—weeks, while the average for the present year is 23 91-100 weeks. The difference thus indicated is not as great as would be supposed from a glance at the difference in the aggregate number of weeks of school, but though in fact slight, it being only one-tenth of a week in the average duration of the schools, still it is a difference in the wrong direction, and considered by itself alone, is indicative of a movement backward instead of forward.

By far too little attention has been generally given in our State to the leading educational topics of the average attendance upon schools, and the average duration of their sessions, and at the risk of an appearance of repetition, as these matters have often before been presented in the reports, it is deemed not only proper, but essential that their importance should again and again be urged upon the attention of all.

To increase the efficiency of the schools, is the direct and ostensible as well as acknowledged object, of all educational discussions and efforts. But schools are mere instrumentalities, agencies, tools, so to speak, for the accomplishment of certain specific purposes, and the success attending their use and operation, will, it is true, depend greatly upon the intrinsic excellence of the schools themselves; but not exclusively so, for the efficiency of any agency in the accomplishment of any given work, will be increased or diminished by expanding or contracting its sphere of labor, and by extending or shortening the time during which it continues in operation.

The average duration of the sessions of the common schools in our State for many years, has been quite small as compared with that of some of the other States, and indeed with all of them that profess to sustain a public free school system. This does not arise from pecuniary inability, neither does it proceed from a pronounced want of attachment to, or appreciation of the common schools. It comes simply from an absence of that frequent and urgent discussion which is so necessary to

preserve a wholesome and vigilant public sentiment in reference to any topic of commanding social or moral moment.

That a good school is better than a bad one is plain enough, and is commonly enough understood; and that a bad school is something worse than good for nothing is beginning to be generally believed. That a good school, other things being equal, will accomplish more for the public good than can one of an inferior quality, is also as true as it is generally conceded. But it is not by any means as clearly perceived and believed that "other things" not "being equal" the same rule does not apply with equal force. It is not always, or commonly true, that a good school that remains in operation only for a short time in each year after a long interval to be succeeded by another equally good, will accomplish more good than a school in some respects inferior, that continues in session for a much longer period. Very few are aware of the extent to which the possible capacity of a public system of schools in actual operation is diminished by apparently slight causes that are by most minds entirely unnoticed or disregarded.

A brief inspection of the statistical facts reported with special reference to their bearing upon this particular point may not be useless, it certainly will be suggestive. Beginning then with the legitimate hypothesis that the public school system of a State is organically intended to provide necessary instruction for the children of the whole State within certain limits that are recognized and prescribed, it is to be supposed to be adequate to the accomplishment of this specific object. The school system of this State then as it exists and is practically operated, is to be supposed to be adequate to give necessary instruction to all the children of the State in the specific branches of study particularly mentioned in the general law. And for the accomplishment of this general object the people of the State expend in support of this system, directly and indirectly, an amount not much, if any, less than a half million of dollars annually.

The whole No. of children between 4 and 18 years of age reported is 88,453. Of this aggregate number only 64,042 have attended school at all, and the average attendance has been only 44,628. But of the children actually attending the school, by far the larger proportion are, as is well known to common observation, quite young, and to them, as yet immature and almost entirely untrained in thought and study, it is a matter of so great consequence as to be indispensable to any fair and

satisfactory progress, that such instruction as may be given them in their earlier years, should be given as continuously, or with as few and short intervals of intellectual idleness as is possible. When these same minds have become more matured and are habituated to hard study and severe thought, then a period of strong intellectual activity may occasionally or indeed often be succeeded by intervals of comparative intellectual inaction with little prejudice. But with quite young pupils, habits of study and thought and intellectual activity are precisely the most desirable because the most valuable results that school culture can possibly give. But the average duration of the sessions of the schools of the State taken together is, as we have seen, a little less than twenty-four weeks. If we look a little farther we find that with 2946 different districts we have had during the past year 4620 different teachers. Thus it appears that of the 2946 districts 2142, or more than 80 per cent of them have employed within the year the services of two teachers. Allowing for the effect upon the average duration, of the fact that the Graded Schools, and the schools in the more populous towns almost uniformly remain in session for eight or nine months in the year, it will be apparent that the average duration of the schools in the smaller districts and towns cannot be longer than about twenty weeks. Taking all these facts together, then, it will appear that in a large proportion of the schools the prevalent custom must be to secure the services of a teacher and sustain a school for two and one-half months, and then at the close of that term to allow a vacation of three and one-half months, after which another teacher is engaged and a school supported for another term of two and one-half months, to which succeeds another vacation of three and one-half months.

Manifestly then under such management, even if the two terms thus widely separated by intervening vacations, were taught by the same person, the children would of necessity be deprived of that prolonged and continuous necessity for mental activity, that alone can infix in their minds those studious and thoughtful proclivities that are the very best fruits of successful teaching. The little that is learned during the term of school, too, is liable to be lost to a great extent in the long vacation, and so the result of the whole year's instruction is vastly less than it might easily be under more reasonable and philosophic modes of procedure. Then these evils are immensely aggravated and the prospect of satisfactory improve-

ment is indefinitely removed by the almost universal prevalence of the custom of discharging the teacher, however successful, at the close of the term, for no assignable and declared reasons, and engaging a new instructor without any other particular recommendation except that he or she is a new teacher.

A prolongation of the terms of school, to be brought about by thorough and frequent discussion, operating upon public sentiment, and by positive modification of law, seems to be the only adequate remedy for the evils alluded to; and as this matter has often been before discussed, I venture here to reproduce from a former report some suggestions upon the subject, simply because they present the matter as clearly and forcibly, and perhaps more so than anything new that I can say.

In connection with this topic I deem it a duty again to call attention to the probable efficacy of a modification of the law in regard to the distribution of the public money in securing a prolongation of the duration of the public schools.

Regarding the necessity of general intelligence to the permanent prosperity of republican institutions as conceded and in view of the undoubted pecuniary ability of Vermont to adopt all measures that are demonstrably necessary to her own growth and strength, it is not an unreasonable proposition to say that the public schools, where, as the statistics of the present year show, nine out of every ten of the children of the State are to receive all the culture that schools will ever give them, should remain in session at least for from $7\frac{1}{2}$ to $8\frac{1}{2}$ months, i. e. for from 60 to 70 per cent of each year. It would be better for the State that the opportunities for receiving a culture that is admitted to be necessary should thus be augmented; and it would be better for the children that they thus for a longer proportionate time should be subjected to the moral and mental discipline of the schools. All this is so manifest that as we look over the statistics, we wonder that the people of a State like Vermont, apt enough to take not a little pride in their established reputation for general intelligence, should year after year allow their public school-houses to remain vacant for more than half of the time. This discrepancy between the ostensible and sometimes ostentatious appreciations of the theory of the public school system, and the actual practice under it, is so great that the immediate inference is that there must be, either patent or latent, powerful causes for such discrepancy. And a little examination reveals at least two features of our school

law whose tendencies to shorten the terms of school are apparent upon even slight considerations.

Wherever in any of the States a public school fund is found to exist, the proceeds of which are periodically distributed in aid of the various school municipalities, it will be found, and I think invariably, that a certain amount of local expenditure to be provided for by self-imposed local taxation, is made a condition precedent to the receipt of any portion of the general public fund. The local expenditure is commonly measured by the duration of the schools thereby sustained; and therefore the common proviso, is, that no school municipality shall receive any portion of the proceeds of the general school fund, unless it shall have contributed to the support of its own schools a certain fixed amount of money, or fixed proportion of the assessed value of its real or personal estate, or, as is more commonly the provision, shall have sustained a legal public school upon its own local funds, for a certain fixed number of weeks or months. This fixed time, during which schools shall thus be supported, varies in the different States adopting this method. In Michigan, for instance, the time is fixed at three months. In Maine no local municipality can receive any portion of the public money, unless it shall during the previous year have raised by taxes an amount equivalent to sixty cents for each inhabitant. In Massachusetts by general law every town is compelled to sustain at least six months school in the year, and can have no portion of the proceeds of the public school fund, unless it shall have expended for teachers' wages, board and fuel and expense of making fires and taking care of the school-house, an amount equivalent to \$1,50 for each inhabitant.

In Vermont, the support of two months' school upon its own funds by each school district, is made the condition precedent to its receiving any share of the public money. And, in practice, the law not specifying the kind of school that shall be sustained sustained by each district, a two months' in the summer season, when no fuel is necessary, taught by a female teacher at little expense, is supposed to constitute a full compliance with the law. From the statistics the average wages of female teachers for the last year is \$8,16. The expense of a two months' school then, would consist of two months' wages for a female teacher \$16,32, and two months' board, which at \$2 per week would be \$16—making in all \$32,32. Now the whole number of children between 4 and 18 reported is 85,795, and the whole number of districts, whole and fractional, being 2,682, the

average number of resident children between 4 and 18 in each district is 32. The whole amount of public money distributed in 1862-3 was 104,754 which gives \$1,22 to each of the resident children between 4 and 18. Each district then, having an average number of 32 resident children between 4 and 18, for each of which it receives \$1,22 from the public money for its compliance with the terms of the law by supporting a two months' school at an average expense of \$32,32, receives \$39,04. It is submitted that such a condition precedent to the reception of a proportion of the public money, is altogether too light and easy to give adequate and proper stimulus to the support of thoroughly good schools for a sufficient length of time.

Again, whatever be the period selected, during which districts or towns are required imperatively, as in Massachusetts, or persuasively as in Vermont, to sustain schools upon their own funds, as it is long or short, it will by serving as a sort of guide, in fact control the time during which, for the remainder of each year, custom will require the schools to be open. In other words, the average duration of the schools in the State will, in all probability, be less when the law imperatively requires schools to be supported by local taxation for only two months, than it would be if the general law required the schools to be supported thus for three or four months. Hence it may well be doubted whether the duration of the sessions of the schools, and of course their efficiency, would not be increased by a lengthening of the terms during which the various districts shall be required to sustain schools upon their own funds, as a condition upon which their receipt of any portion of the public money shall be based.

Another cause of the comparative brevity of the sessions of the public schools in this State, may be found in the method adopted in making distribution of the public money to the various districts. This matter was particularly alluded to in the report of last year, but if at all instrumental in shortening the duration of the schools, the importance of its consequences will sufficiently account for its re-introduction.

Under existing laws the public money is distributed annually to the various towns in proportion to their respective population. Then annually at the time appointed, the selectmen of each town distribute a fixed portion of the distributive share of the public money already apportioned to such towns, among the various districts of such towns that have complied with all conditions of the law, in proportion to the average daily atten-

dance of the children of such district upon the public schools of such district. This average daily attendance is ascertained by dividing the aggregate attendance upon each public school, by the number of days during which such school has been sustained. A little consideration will show that while such a method of distribution tends very manifestly to encourage regularity of attendance upon the schools while they are in session, it not only does not tend to induce a lengthening of the terms of the schools, but must necessarily have a strong tendency to encourage short sessions. For it is plainly more difficult to sustain a high rate of average attendance upon a school that is sustained eight months, than upon one that is sustained only four months. And the rule, other things being equal, will be found to be, that the shorter the term of any school, the higher will be the rate of average attendance. Thus the effect of the law of the distribution of the public money, under which the distributive share of each district increases or diminishes in direct proportion to the increase or diminution of its average daily attendance, operates directly and powerfully to discourage lengthened terms of school. And this method of distribution is also unjust and unequal in its bearing upon different districts. And, as illustrative of this fact, and to conclude what I desire to say in this connection, I will take the liberty to insert an extract from the Report of last year.

If district A with an earnest desire to promote the welfare of its children sustains a school for eight months in a year with an average daily attendance of eighteen; while district B with a more scrupulous economy of dollars, although having the same number of children of school age, sustains its school for only five months, and from the very brevity of its sessions, with an average attendance of twenty pupils;—district B will, under the law, receive a larger portion of the public money than district A, because the distributive share of a district depends upon its average daily attendance, without any reference to the length of the term. Thus the law operates unequally upon the two districts, and with manifest injustice to the district which has taxed itself the highest in support of its schools.

In the original draft of the school law of 1858, the distribution of this portion of the public money was directed to be made to the various districts in proportion to the *aggregate* daily attendance upon the schools. By this means, regularity of attendance and length of term were both taken into account, and each district would receive a share of the public money direct-

ly proportioned to the efforts it might have made in the support of schools. But during the passage of the act through the Legislature, its phraseology was changed and the distributive share of each district was made to depend upon the *average daily* attendance, instead of upon the *aggregate daily* attendance. I have always doubted the wisdom and expediency of the change, and desire to commend this subject to the special consideration of the Board.

GRADED SCHOOLS.

An increasing tendency toward the adoption of the Graded School system is manifested during the past year, as has been the case in recent previous years. The number of Graded and High Schools in existence is much smaller than it ought to be ; but the public mind is annually more and more attracted to the consideration of the true policy of education, and in various localities movements looking to the establishment of Graded Schools have begun, and with favorable prospect of success.

The law of the State in reference to the Union and Graded Schools has this peculiarity, that it has nothing of compulsion whatever in its provisions. The general law, after providing that the education of the children, in at least the fundamental branches, shall be secured by the establishment of ordinary district schools, leaves the subsequent and more advanced instruction of the children of the various communities to the good sense and liberality of those communities. Its language is that the various districts *may* establish and support such high schools as they choose, and gives them the power to provide for their support.

The higher schools that may be established under our general law are of two distinct and quite different characters. The Union School is formed by the voluntary union of two or more districts, which, retaining each their own original and separate municipal character, in all other respects unchanged, and each, as required by law, continuing to sustain its own ordinary district school, by vote unite for the special purpose, by action of the joint municipality thus formed, of establishing and sustaining a union or higher school for the benefit of the children of all the districts thus uniting. And when thus a Union District is formed, its Prudential Committee consists of the chairmen of the Prudential Committees of the various districts thus uniting. It is apparent thus that the union or high school will

be under the guidance of a different committee from the committees that control and direct the ordinary districts, and thus the same power does not control the elementary or primary schools, and the secondary and higher schools. This fact constitutes an organic deficiency or weakness that always must detract so much from the efficiency of the Union School system as to render it of little avail, and prevent its general adoption; because, in any grouping of schools for the purpose of providing for the instruction of pupils at once in the elementary, the intermediate and the higher branches, it will be found necessary to separate the schools so that different grades of instruction shall be given in different schools; and in order to do this, to sustain as perfect a graduation of the different schools with special reference of each to all others as is possible; and, regulating the passage of pupils from lower to higher schools by actual and reliable examination, rigidly to retain pupils in the schools which, by such examination, shall be ascertained to be appropriate for their attainments and qualification. Otherwise, when such graduation is not attained, the higher of the schools in the group must be diverted from their own peculiar functions of giving instruction in higher branches, and compelled to correct the imperfections of superficial teaching in the lower schools, and thus become comparatively useless.

On account perhaps of this characteristic weakness of the Union School system, but few instances of their adoption have occurred in the State; and it cannot be recommended where the Graded School system can be established.

Under the Graded School law, a far more perfect gradation of schools with reference to each other, and a more perfect adaptation of the different grades to the actual condition and necessities of the various communities, is attained.

Under this latter system, two or more districts can, by the intervention of town action, become united or consolidated, and even the districts of a whole town may thus unite, and form one single and independent organization or corporation. And any single district by itself, or any consolidated district after such union, when the number of its scholars is too large to be conveniently and profitably instructed in a single school, may, by a vote of a school meeting warned for the purpose, divide their school into two, three or more departments; may provide by vote that instruction be given in any of the higher sciences or studies; may vote to employ any necessary number of teachers; may provide accommodation for such schools, by

adding to and enlarging the school house, or building a sufficient number of school houses; and the direction and government of all the different schools is intrusted to one Prudential Committee. Under this system, the higher school or schools, dependent upon the vote of the district for its character, can easily adapt themselves perfectly to the educational necessities of the community where located, both as to time of session and grade of instruction. If the district is comparatively small, the district may add an extension to the school house, thus providing two apartments; may support a school for the younger children during two, four, six or more months, and may sustain a school of a higher character for three or more months annually, and in the higher department of the school may provide instruction in any branches that the scholars see fit to pursue. Under this system a large place may consolidate all its districts; and, gathering all its children into one large school house, may collect its schools of all grades under one roof, and there, from the elements of the language up to the highest grade of studies pursued in any Academy, may qualify its scholars for the actual business of life in all its multifarious modifications. The excellencies of Graded Schools are becoming constantly more apparent by discussion; and wherever actually tried, have so commended themselves, that perhaps not a single locality that has received the various benefits of their operation would now willingly exchange them for any other plan.

It is found, by actual experiment, that Graded Schools effectually relieve themselves of the principal difficulties and obstacles that encumber the working of the common district schools, as the friends of their theory have always supposed and contended that they would.

The prominent practical evils that afflict the common schools, and prevent their full accomplishment of the purposes for which they were designed, are quite patent and commonly recognized. Among them are the following: financial and numerical weakness, caused by an unwise and unnecessary division and sub-division of districts; the selection of improper and incompetent persons to fill the various offices of the District; the employment of unqualified teachers, because they are cheap; the construction of inconvenient, unhealthy, ill-ventilated and badly located school houses; the entire lack of apparatus and other equipments absolutely necessary to the preparation and furnishing of schools of the first excellence; the frequent, unnecessary and injurious change of teachers;

the mixture of all ages, sizes and degrees, both of capacity and qualification, in one and the same school ; the great multiplicity of classes, that render all true and thorough instruction impossible, from mere want of necessary time and opportunity ; the general dissatisfaction with the results actually brought about in the schools, and the consequent withdrawal of interest and attention ; and, as resulting from all these, the tendency to favor and support a multiplicity of private and select schools.

It is evident to any who give careful consideration to the nature and theory of Graded Schools that, as a matter of reasoning, they ought to give decided relief from most, if not all, of the evils enumerated ; and as a matter of fact, wherever thoroughly tried, they have not failed to do so.

In addition to what has been said, there are certain positive results that are accomplished by Graded schools wherever a fair opportunity is given them to do their work, among which the following are prominent :—

1st.—They give an opportunity for instruction in all grades of school culture, as well the highest as the most elementary. They may easily be so managed as fully to supply the place of the best Academies, and at the same time give much more thorough and systematic instruction in the various elements of knowledge in all directions.

2d.—They are perfectly adaptable, fitting themselves to the educational wants of the largest and the comparatively small communities where they may be located.

3d.—They very much lessen, by economizing the labor of instruction ; because by their means it becomes possible for the teacher in the same time to instruct classes of thirty pupils as well as he would in an ordinary school teach classes of three or four ; and indeed he can do it much better and more effectively.

4th.—They render all educational labor more effective ; because, by diminishing the number of classes given to each teacher, they largely increase the time that can be given to recitation, and so give opportunity for demonstration, illustration and remark, without which recitations are mere forms without value.

5th.—They promote and secure much more perfect government and moral culture ; for, by graduation of the pupils, they make it possible to subject each grade of the school to the discipline that is most appropriate for it.

6th.—They give permanent employment for teachers,

and by so doing secure a better class of teachers; and they also add to the power of teachers, by affording to each precisely that sphere of labor for which he is best qualified, and in which he is likely best to succeed.

7th.—They diminish the expense of education generally, as they require a less number of school houses and of teachers; for, under this system, a teacher can attend to many more pupils with great or greater advantage to each.

8th.—By increasing the number of pupils and the size of classes, they tend to excite a spirit of emulation; and, by stirring the ambition of scholars, promote a more rapid development.

9th.—They relieve parents to a great extent from the necessity of sending children away from home, at the most critical period of life, by giving them at home, and surrounded by all the saving and softening influences of home, as good opportunities for culture as can be obtained elsewhere.

10th.—They tend directly to promote the material prosperity of every community where they may be established; for they powerfully attract intelligent men of large families, industrious habits and small means, who will, of course, prefer localities where, investing their capital in business, and sustaining their families by their own exertions, they may secure at a reasonable expense the thorough education of their children.

TEACHERS,—THEIR NUMBER.

By a comparison of statistics there appears to have been a diminution of the number of different persons employed as teachers during the year. In 1864 the number of different teachers reported was 4851; during the last year the number reported has been 4620; showing a diminution in the number of 231. The reported decrease in the number of districts will of course account, so far, for this variation in number, but as the decrease in the number of districts is only 36, it does not fully explain the change. Inferring then, as seems proper from the figures, that this difference in the number of teachers employed is caused by the employment of a larger proportionate number of teachers for a second term in the same district, the facts show an increasing tendency in the State to employ teachers that have satisfactorily discharged their duties, and this showing is full of encouragement. It may be stated that our schools have required, in order to their immediate and permanent improvement, more than any other thing that can be

specified, that they should be managed in all respects with the same practical sagacity and sound judgment that is shown by citizens generally in the management of their own private affairs; and the want of this sagacity has nowhere appeared more glaringly than in the frequent and oftentimes unnecessary change of teachers, so peculiarly characteristic of our State. No individual, in the management of his own private affairs, is in the habit of employing, when necessary, to assist him in the prosecution of his business, a succession of agents, most of whom are strangers, and often employing them for a short space of time,—of discharging them without any other reason than that the time for which they were engaged has expired, in order that he may engage some other stranger of no greater capacity and bringing no probability of better success in satisfying his employers. Such a course would be universally considered unwise in the extreme, and the person so managing his own affairs would be deemed by the whole community to be lacking in common sense. Yet precisely such is the prevalent management of our schools, as is already evinced by the statistics, for as we have seen in the discussion of a previous topic, during the past year, itself an improvement upon former years, more than 60 per cent of the districts—with an average duration of schools of less than 24 weeks,—have employed two different teachers in the schools. It is to be hoped that the improvement in this particular shown by the statistics may appear more decidedly in years to come.

MALE AND FEMALE TEACHERS.

The statistics show, as for several years before, an increasing tendency in the direction of the substitution of female for male teachers in the common schools. This tendency has been so strong and the actual substitution so extensive as to make this topic as prominent as it is important, and it can hardly fail to receive the earnest attention of the Board, and of all who take much thought of the condition of the schools.

The number of weeks of school by male teachers reported for the last year is 8729, and the number of weeks of school by female teachers is 54,555. The number of weeks of school by male teachers in the year 1863-64 was 10,413, and in 1862-63 it was 11,136. The number of weeks of school by female teachers reported in 1863-64 was 53,999, and in 1862-63 it was 52,905. And the same tendency is very apparent in previous years. The

number of weeks of school by males in 1861-62, was 14,500; in 1860-61 it was 15,950, in 1859-60 it was 15,879; and the number of weeks of school taught by females was in those years as follows,—in 1861-62 it was 51,065, in 1860-61 it was 48,798; and in 1859-60 it was 47,671. Or, stating the facts in another way, to make the change more apparent, the extent to which the schools has been in the hands of male and female teachers respectively is shown to have been as follows. In 1859-60 male teachers taught 24 per cent,—female teachers 76 per cent; in 1860-61 males 25 per cent, females 75 per cent; in 1861-62 males 23 per cent, females 77 per cent; in 1862-63, males 18 per cent, females 82 per cent; in 1863-64, males 17 per cent, females 83 per cent; in 1864-65, males 14 per cent, females 86 per cent. From which it appears that the last four years the substitution of female for male teachers has been so great that nine per-cent of the schools that some four years ago were in the hands of male teachers, are now intrusted to the care of females. So great a change in the management of the schools, and one that must necessarily be fraught with so many important consequences, affecting both the moral and mental culture of the children, is well worthy the thoughtful consideration of all. The subject has been so often and so fully discussed in the annual reports heretofore, and has very deservedly received the attention of the Board in their own Report for this year; and therefore will not here be pressed.

TEACHERS' WAGES.

One of the most satisfactory and encouraging facts that appear from the statistics of the year is the increase in the compensation that has been paid to the teachers throughout the State. It has been observed for many years with much uneasiness by those who pay much regard to the revelations of the statistics as being reliable indicators of the general sentiment of the people, that the wages of teachers in our State did not advance as far, or as rapidly, as did the compensation demanded and received in other avocations. It was supposed, and not without reason, to show a diminution of general interest in the welfare of the schools. Schools, it was said, are subject to the same laws that govern the markets in other respects where talent and skill seek employment. If experience and capacity are seeking employment, and can command in the vocation of teaching the same reward that they can and do re-

ceive in other employments, then competent teachers will seek the vocation and the schools will be supplied. But if a given capacity can find in manual labor whether skilled or unskilled, or in commercial or professional life greater wages than it can ever command in the vocation of teaching, then it is idle to suppose that any ingenuity of argument or persuasion will enable the schools to escape from the irresistible conclusions of the general law of demand and supply; and competent abilities will desert the schools for other employments that will be more remunerative. And such, in fact, has been the result in years past. The more experienced and more competent of our teachers, after having to some extent become masters of their profession, have annually left our schools to engage elsewhere in schools of a similar character where their labors would be no more difficult but where their compensation would be much larger. In 1863 while the average compensation of male teachers was in Vermont \$18,20, in Massachusetts it was \$41.71; and while female teachers in Vermont received \$7,76, in Massachusetts they received \$13,95. The effect of such a condition of things was precisely what might have been anticipated,—while the young and inexperienced teachers remained, the older and more skilled sought higher wages elsewhere.

But a decided change for the better is shown in the reports for the last year. For the 10,413 weeks of school taught by males in 1863-4, was paid in wages the sum of \$53,400, which gives \$20,48 per month exclusive of board; in 1864-65, for 8729 weeks taught by males the amount of wages paid was \$51,960, which gives \$23,80 per month exclusive of board. By this there appears an increase of the wages of male teachers during the last year of \$3,32 per month, which is an increase of 16 1-5 per cent. For the 53,999 weeks of school taught by females in 1863-64, there was paid in wages the sum of \$110,191, and in 1864-65 for 54,555 weeks of school taught by female teachers was paid in wages the sum of \$143,553; by which there appears to have been during the last year an increase of the wages of female teachers of \$2,36, which is an increase of 28 4-5 per cent. The average monthly wages of female teachers exclusive of board for the last year is \$10,52.

It is encouraging thus from these figures to see that the wages of teachers of all classes have advanced, and it is not discouraging to note that while the advance of the wages of male teachers is equal to 16 1-5 per-cent, the advance of the wages of female teachers is still greater and amounts to 28 4-5

per cent, for the disparity between the wages paid to male and female teachers while the largely increased proportion of female teachers is proved by the official returns and by general observation to have enured to the benefit of the schools, has been as unaccountable as it was unjust and inexcusable.

BOARDING AROUND.

The statistics do not show as great a diminution in the practice of "boarding around" as might reasonably have been expected to follow the legislation of the last session of the Legislature; for, although the enactment intended to terminate the practice of boarding around did not take full effect till near the close of the year to which the present statistics apply, it might reasonably have been supposed to have a strong effect upon the customs of the state. The number of teachers reported as boarding around during the past year is 3049, or 66 per cent of the whole number of different teachers employed; and the number of teachers boarding around reported in the previous year was 3214, which was also 66 per cent of the whole number employed.

The tenacity with which this practice of boarding the teacher around among the various families of the district has been adhered to in the State, in spite of the many and strong objections that have been constantly urged against it, is almost unaccountable; and yet an inspection of the reports of the Superintendents will show that, while a large majority of the different localities are reported to have acquiesced in the operation of the law with cheerfulness, and many with alacrity, still in very many towns the law is said to have been received with emphatic disfavor; and in a number of towns the districts exercising their ingenuity at the expense of their reputation for common sense and obedience to law, have endeavored to avoid the legitimate operation of a law which, in requiring that all moneys necessary to defray the expense of supporting the schools, shall be raised by a *tax upon the Grand List*, manifestly intended to terminate the practice of boarding around, by apportioning the expense of board by boarding the teacher around among the citizens of the district in proportion to their various Grand Lists. It is also well known that in various sections of the State efforts have already been made to make a pledge to go for the repeal of the law referred to a pre-requisite to the support of those who favor such repeal.

This matter of boarding around has been habitually discussed with such exclusive reference to statements and arguments of the narrowest character and most limited scope, that the real merits of the discussion are to many entirely unknown; and the variety and evil influences of the prevalence of the practice are so great, that no excuse can be thought necessary for alluding to the subject, so long as it may prevail to any extent worthy of notice. It is claimed by those who favor the practice of boarding around in proportion to the attendance upon the school that, in the first place, by this practice an excellent opportunity is afforded the teacher to become familiarly acquainted with the parents and children of the district, and to "learn human nature"; and as these acquirements are indispensable to the teacher, therefore the teacher should board around.

In reply to this, it might be said, in the first place, admitting the necessity of an intimate acquaintance on the part of the teacher with the characters of the pupils, their parents and the citizens generally, it is not at all certain that this necessary acquaintance would be promoted by boarding a short portion of time in each family in the district.

Another reply is that, admitting the convenience of this general and particular acquaintance to the teacher, in order to enable him fully to discharge his various duties, it is no more true of the teacher than it is of the physician or of the preacher. He who cares for the bodies or the souls of men requires fully as much to know accurately all their various traits and characteristics, mental, moral or corporeal, as does he who is to care for the improvement of their minds. But the entire absurdity of the practice could never be made more apparent than by an application to the doctor and the preacher of the same practice which is thus held to be not only rational, but decidedly expedient as applied to the teacher. Suppose the application be made. The teacher, because an intimate knowledge of the various characteristic traits of character of his pupils and their parents would facilitate his efforts and give them greater effect, it is claimed, should board around among the different families; and, some measure of time being indispensable to arrange the matter of board equitably and satisfactorily, he ought to board in the different families in proportion to the number of children that attend the school, i. e., in proportion to the existing necessity in each family, for his professional assistance. Apply the same rule to the doctor; and because the judicious and effectual application to the cure of disease of the necessary

and appropriate remedies, requires an intimate acquaintance with the various elements of character, moral, mental or physical, of his patients, therefore the physician should board around; and, fixing the existing necessity for his services as the standard of time, as in the case of the teacher, the doctor should board around in proportion to the prevalence and virulence of Diphtheria and Scarlet Fever. And, as the rule is to the fullest extent equally applicable to the teacher of morals and religion, then the preacher too should board around in proportion to the prevalent wickedness and disregard of all moral right. Such an application of the principles claimed smothers them in absurdity.

It is said, in the second place, that it will be far less burdensome for many families to pay such portion of the expense of the schools as accrues from boarding the teacher, in actually boarding the teacher for the proper proportionate time, than it would be to pay it in money.

Whatever force there may be in this reasoning—and that there is some force in it is not denied—it is believed to be more than counter-balanced by facts and arguments that might be urged on the other side.

In the first place, the only logical basis upon which, in any republican State, a State system of public schools can find a stable and permanent foundation, consists in the necessity of general intelligence and virtue, in order to the general security of life and property, wherever, from the nature of the government, universal suffrage endows every individual with the character of a law-maker.

Good laws, general orderliness and peace give security to property and to life. A general diffusion of knowledge and uprightness give possibility and existence to good laws, general orderliness and peace. A general public system of schools, extending the benefits of moral and mental culture to all, can alone secure a general diffusion of knowledge and uprightness. Therefore a public system of free schools is indispensable in every republican State, and is to be considered a matter of necessity and self-protection, and cannot be dispensed with. Therefore all the property of the State, of every description, should ratably contribute to defray all the expenses of a system of public schools without which security to property is hopeless and indeed impossible. By any logical and reasonable theory of republicanism, then, all the expenses of the public schools should be defrayed by a tax upon the Grand List; or, in other

words, upon the property of the community. And so any attempt to distribute the expense of the board of the teacher, or of any other item of the expense of sustaining the public schools in proportion to the scholars that may attend the school, is in direct contravention of all the theoretical principles of democratic institutions.

As a matter of practical experiment, too, the statistics furnish reason to believe that the apportionment of the expense of boarding the teacher and of fuel upon the scholars who may attend the school, has operated most disastrously for the State.

The State system of public schools must, as a matter of theory, be supposed to be adequate for the purpose for which it was designed, in other words, adequate to give necessary culture to the 88,453 children reported as of school age. And for this agency, thus theoretically sufficient for the accomplishment of its work, the people annually pay \$500,000. And this vast sum is paid, not as a matter of ornamental or philanthropic policy, but as a matter of stern necessity. The State needs that all her 88,453 children should be instructed as a matter of indispensable self-protection. Whatever, then, stands in the way of, or prevents the accomplishment by the schools of their appropriate and allotted work, is prejudicial to the highest interests of the State.

Now a glance at the statistics shows us that some agency or power does stand in the way of the accomplishment by the schools of their proper work. The statistics show that while the whole number of the children of the State of school age, between 4 and 18 years of age is, 88,453; of all these children only 64,042 have attended school at all. This gives 24,411, or 27 per cent of the whole, that during the past year have not attended school at all. And looking a little farther, we find that the average attendance upon the schools of those between the ages of 4 and 21 has been 44,628, and if from this we take the probable average attendance of pupils between 18 and 20 years, which is 1521, we shall have the average attendance upon the schools of the children between 4 and 18 years to be 43,107 which is 48 7-10 per cent, or less than one-half. But if a system of schools organically sufficient for the education of 88,453 children within certain limits, cost \$500,000, and yet while sufficient to teach all, is so operated and under such circumstances as to educate only 48 7-10 per-cent, or less than one-half of the children for whom it is intended and is adequate;

then if figures prove anything, these figures prove that one-half of the State expenditures for schools, or \$250,000, is lost.

It is a little strange that among a sharp and a shrewd people, a greater effort has not been hitherto made to discover the cause or causes of so great wastefulness. What then is the leading causes of an average absence from the public schools of more than half of the children of the State, for whose instruction they were organized?

Perhaps a slight inspection of the statistics, together with certain known facts respecting the practical operation of the school system, will help us to give a reasonable and probable answer to this question.

Allowing that an average district pursues the course generally practiced, and figuring expenses in accordance with the discoveries of the statistics, the following nearly will be the result.

At the annual meeting the plan will be proposed and accepted of sustaining a two month's summer school upon the Grand List, then putting the board and fuel for the whole year upon the scholar, and then to sustain as many more weeks of school as will suffice to exhaust the public money. According to this plan, the expenses will be nearly as follows: upon the property will be paid the expense of two months summer school taught by a woman because it will be less expensive. Two months school by a female teacher, at the statistical average price \$10.52 per month will cost \$21.04. It being summer there will be no expense for fuel. And as the board of teacher and fuel are to be put upon the scholar, and only enough more school be taught to expend the public money, of which the average amount to each district is \$39, there will be nothing more in the way of expense to be paid upon the Grand List.

Upon the scholar will be levied taxes to pay the board of the teacher for the average term—24 weeks—at the average price ascertained by the year's statistics, of \$2 per-week, amounting to \$48, and to pay the expense of fuel for the year which may be estimated at five cords, which, at \$3.50 per cord will amount to \$17.50. In the supposed district then, pursuing the ordinary course, and regulating the expenses entirely in accordance with the revelations of the statistics, the property of the district will pay \$21.04, and the children of the district attending school will pay the sum of \$65.50. When we call to mind the uniformity with which children seem to be distribu-

ted to the families everywhere in inverse proportion to their pecuniary ability, it will be apparent that of the average amount of public money distributed, \$39, which is distributed mainly in proportion to the average attendance of the children the major portion of whom come from the poorer families, the inequality and injustice of the practice of boarding around becomes very apparent. The statistics show the aggregate average number of children attending the school to have been 64,042. This aggregate average attendance divided by the whole number of districts gives 16 as the average daily attendance of each district. Now dividing the \$65,50, the average amount to be paid by each district upon the scholars attending the schools, by the average number 16, attending school constantly, we have \$4.09 to be paid by each scholar attending.

Surely when thus it is seen that under the practice of boarding around, by far the heaviest taxes necessary in the support of the school are levied upon the scholar, the property paying less than one-fourth while the scholars pay three-fourths, there can be little doubt that one powerful agency in diminishing the attendance upon the schools is discovered.

But, it is said that "when a poor man is really unable to board the teacher, we pass him by and let him go." But what right has any man or any set of men so to manage a system of republican institutions as to compel a citizen on account of poverty to accept as a charity from his neighbors what belongs to him of right from the government of which, though poor, he is a constituent part?

But other and stronger objections may well be urged against the boarding around practice. By the statistics we have discovered that more than four-fifths of the districts employ two teachers annually, and common observation shows that a very large proportion of these teachers are quite young and inexperienced. All teachers need daily study and exertion and thought in order to enable them to sustain the necessary interest in the various branches which they teach. This is of course especially true of the younger teachers; and it may be said that the most prominent want of our schools is not so much a better class of teachers, as a better application of the latent capacity now possessed by the present teachers. But without study,—daily study and thought—the best powers of our teachers cannot be developed. Whatever then has a tendency to encourage and promote the habit of study and thought on the part of our teachers in the effort daily to increase their

power and efficiency in giving instruction, operates directly and powerfully to the improvement of the school. But in order to the possibility of this thought and study on the part of the teacher he must have quiet retirement and opportunity for study. Herein is the specially mischievous tendency of the practice of boarding around, that it absolutely precludes the teacher from that daily study and effort, without which even an old teacher must constantly deteriorate, and without which a young teacher must fail; and in so doing strikes directly at the improvement of the schools.

It is also true that wherever the practice of putting the expense of board and fuel upon the scholar has prevailed, it has ever been a source of constant quarrel and discussion; for, diametrically opposed in principle to the general tenor and spirit of republican institutions, effort after effort will be made when occasion offers to substitute a more democratic and equitable custom, and the result has often been to keep the district in constant strife and to embitter the feelings of citizens, and thus to diminish the good effect of the school.

The Legislature at its last session most wisely enacted laws intended to put a final termination to this undemocratic and injurious custom; and while they remain in force, in spite of the efforts of ingenious men to avoid the effect of the law by cunning devices and exceeding shrewd tricks; and in spite of efforts already actively in operation to procure the repeal of the law; it is to be hoped not only that no repeal will ever be attained, but that additional Legislation will so construe the laws already enacted that a practice which drives the children of the poor from the public schools; which deprives the teachers of all opportunity for study and self improvement; which creates an excessive inequality of taxation; which compels men, merely on account of poverty, to meekly receive as beggars the full enjoyment of valuable privileges that belong to them of right; which tends always to excite bitterness and a spirit of unrest and animosity, shall be forever eradicated. While we thank the good Father that with all its many burdens and sorrows, this terrible war has destroyed the venom and the power of the spirit of caste that for many long years has cursed one portion of our common country, let us pray that that same spirit may not find a refuge in the glens of the Green Mountains, and by levying taxes for the support of education "upon the scholar" seal forever the fountain of knowledge to the children of the poor and the needy.

ATTENDANCE UPON THE SCHOOLS.

The topic of attendance upon the schools has been so frequently and urgently presented in the Annual Reports from this department, that on this account as well as on account of the desirability of securing as great brevity as is practicable in the present Report, I shall not dwell upon it here at length. But it is a matter of too great importance to be entirely omitted, and it is at least entirely proper to call particular attention to the fact that while in many respects the statistics show decided improvement in the schools, little change for the better appears in the matter of attendance. With a public school system in successful operation which is exceedingly expensive, even where administered with rigid economy, and which is sufficient to give elementary education to every child in the State, it ought to excite alarm in every well wisher to the State that by the statistics of the School Registers, less than one half of the children of school age have, during the past year attended, the schools upon an average. Such a fact should arouse in every citizen a spirit of earnest and active investigation of the causes of such a neglect of the opportunities of education, and a resolute determination to apply any remedies that fairly promise an improvement.

The prominent and most efficient causes of this great irregularity may be stated to be:—

1st.—A general want of active and acting interest in the welfare of the schools on the part of citizens generally, and particularly on the part of men prominent in political and social and business life.

For this the only reliable remedy is a persistent and often renewed discussion of the general topic of public schools, which shall forcibly present the schools in all their various connections with the moral, political, social and material interests of the State. The discussion should be heard from the pulpit—the press—and the platform. It should be found in the annual reports,—the statistics,—the various educational associations,—the Superintendent's reports, and perhaps more especially than elsewhere, in the town and school meetings throughout the commonwealth.

2nd.—The next great source of irregularity of attendance is a want of knowledge of the facts in regard to this particular matter, on the part of parents and citizens.

The only certain remedy for this is to be found in a more pains-taking and accurate collection of the statistics in reference

to attendance and absence, and a wider dissemination of the knowledge of the facts thus ascertained, and of the inevitable consequences that grow out therefrom.

3d.—The next prominent cause of failure in attendance in past time has been the practice hitherto prevalent of laying the most burdensome tax requisite in the support of schools upon the scholars attending, which must palpably have had the effect and could not have been reasonably expected to have operated otherwise,—to drive the children of many poor families from the schools, thus presenting the good State of Vermont in the attitude of doing indirectly and in an insidious, or to speak it plainly,—a sneaking way,—what the disloyal states of the late rebellion did boldly and openly.

For this a remedy has already been found in the legislation of the last Legislature, when its enactment requiring all taxes for the support of schools to be raised upon the property of the State shall be rightly understood, properly construed and fairly enforced.

4th.—Another cause of the great and unusual lack of attendance upon the public schools may be found in the entire lack of any compulsory or even persuasive provision in our constitution or general laws intended to correct this great evil.

To what extent, under a republican government, compulsory measures of legislation intended to enforce attendance upon the public schools required by law to be supported and thrown open to all the children of the State, may properly be made a part of a general system of law, is a point in regard to which a great variety of opinions exist, and all with plausible arguments in their favor. But that, wherever a public school system freely open to access by all children of every class is made a part of the policy of the State, there can be but little doubt in the minds of any that any merely persuasive legislation, intended, without actual compulsion, to induce as large as possible attendance upon the schools, that may be practicable, and give any probability of success, might be considered not only unobjectionable but very expedient.

In the light of recent demonstrations of the near connection between general intelligence and knowledge, and the stability and safety of democratic institutions and the peace and prosperity of those living under them, it may be well to ask ourselves whether the constitution of a free State which extends the right of suffrage almost indiscriminately to every adult man, ought not to secure its own permanence and guard its

own life by making some small degree of intelligence and some slight mental culture a condition precedent to the exercise of the right of suffrage. And in this connection and just at this time, when the heavy dead swells have not yet subsided which indicate the tremendous power of the revolutionary storm which has recently swept over the sea of our political existence, to call attention to the constitutional provision of one of our sister States cannot be considered out of place.

In the Constitution of the commonwealth of Massachusetts, is found the following provision :

Art 20.—No person shall have the right to vote, or be eligible to office under the constitution of this commonwealth, who shall not be able to read the Constitution in the English language, and write his name; provided however, that the provisions of this amendment shall not apply to any person prevented by a physical disability from complying with its requisitions, nor to any person who now has the right to vote, nor to any person who shall be sixty years of age or upwards at the time this amendment shall take affect.

And it may well be doubted whether a republican government may not legitimately and properly go still further and by deprivations and penalties enforce attendance upon the schools which it provides for its children. It is exceeding difficult to meet and refute the arguments of those who, perhaps somewhat reluctantly paying their taxes for the support of schools, accompany their compliance with the law with the assertion that if you compel a man having no children to contribute, whether he be willing or not, to the schools which educate the children of men who can pay nothing, you ought on the other hand to compel those for whose benefit the schools are thus provided by compulsory taxation, to avail themselves of the benefits thus proffered, by compulsory enactments if necessary.

The argument would run as follows: The absolute necessity for a general diffusion of knowledge and intelligence in order to secure the safety and permanence of republican government is so palpable that it is supposed to furnish a logical and sufficient base upon which to test the right of the State to enforce a general taxation of all property to sustain a system of free schools that alone can generally diffuse the needed knowledge and intelligence. But if the indispensability of this general diffusion of knowledge is sufficient to vindicate the propriety of enforcing taxation to support schools as a matter

of State safety and self-preservation, then on the same grounds it is sufficiently indispensable to warrant the securing of the successful operation of the schools and the full and efficient discharge of their functions in educating the children by compulsory enactments intended and tending to secure their attendance.

As very suggestive in regard to this much disputed question I introduce here a few extracts from the laws of Massachusetts in regard to truancy and cognate subjects.

CHAP. 41.—SEC. 1.—Every person having under his control a child between the ages of eight and fourteen years, shall annually during the continuance of his control send such child to some public school in the city or town in which he resides, at least twelve weeks, if the public schools of such city or town so long continue, six weeks of which time shall be consecutive; and for any neglect of such duty the party offending shall forfeit to the use of such city or town a sum not exceeding twenty dollars: but if it appears, upon the inquiry of the truant-officers or School Committee of any city or town, or upon the trial of any prosecution, that the party so neglecting was not able, by reason of poverty, to send such child to school, or to furnish him with the means of education, or that such child has been otherwise furnished with the means of education for a like period of time, or has already acquired the branches of learning taught in the public schools, or that his bodily or mental condition has been such as to prevent his attendance at school or application to study for the period required, the penalty before mentioned shall not be incurred.

CHAP. 42.—SEC. 4.—Each city or town may make all needful provisions and arrangements concerning habitual truants, and children not attending school, or without any regular and lawful occupation, or growing up in ignorance, between the ages of five and sixteen years; and also all such by-laws respecting such children as shall be deemed most conducive to their welfare, and the good order of such city or town; and there shall be annexed to such by-laws suitable penalties, not exceeding twenty dollars, for any one breach: provided that such by-laws shall be approved by the Superior Court of the County.

SEC. 5.—The several cities and towns availing themselves of the provisions of the preceding section, shall appoint at the annual meetings of such towns, or annually by the mayor or aldermen of such cities, three or more persons, who alone shall be authorized, in case of violation of such by-laws, to make the

complaint and carry into execution the judgments thereon.

SEC. 6.—A minor convicted, under such by-law, of being an habitual truant, or of not attending school, or of being without regular and lawful occupation, or growing up in ignorance, may, at the discretion of the Justice or Court having jurisdiction of the case, instead of the fine mentioned in Section 4, be committed to any such institution of instruction, house of reformation, or suitable situation provided for the purpose under authority of Section 4, for such time, not exceeding two years, as such Justice or Court may determine.

APPARATUS.

Next to the alarming condition of the public schools with reference to irregularity of attendance, perhaps the least creditable revelation of the Statistics is that which shows that, while in most respects the schools have been steadily improving, no advance of any moment has for years been made in supplying our schools with those convenient and, it may be said without exaggeration, indispensable articles of apparatus that have become quite common in schools of the same grade in other States. By the Statistics we find in the 2640 districts of our State the following beggarly list of the important articles of apparatus. There are 108 dictionaries, 188 globes, 293 sets of maps, 125 clocks and 36 thermometers. And in all of these articles scarcely any increase has been made in ten years.

This furnishes another illustration of what has before been again and again mentioned, that a leading necessity of our schools is the exercise in their management of the same sagacity and good sense that are employed generally in the management of the private affairs of individuals. Probably not a single thoroughly competent teacher can be found, and indeed scarcely a single intelligent person conversant with the requirements and characteristics of good teaching that will hesitate a moment in asserting the absolute necessity of the most common articles of apparatus, in order to thorough, rapid and efficient instruction in all the branches required by the laws of most States.

It is scarcely possible to give satisfactory instruction in the science of Geography to the class of young minds for whom instruction in that branch is required from our schools, without maps and globes. The blackboard is, of course, indispensable to proper teaching of Arithmetic, and it is hardly less

so to efficient teaching of Grammar, Geography and Penmanship; and yet the supply of blackboards in the schools is miserably inadequate for even common and only ordinary instruction. The result is,—and this result is particularly marked in the teaching of Geography,—that not only less progress is made by an average class, in any given time, than by the help of common and easily procured articles of apparatus could, and in most cases, would be made in half the time; but whatever advance is made is less certain and reliable. Indeed it is the want of time for demonstration, illustration and remark, and the absence of the means and appliances to make demonstration and illustration complete, satisfactory and conclusive, to which mainly we owe the superficiality and incompleteness of the knowledge given of Geography and Grammar in our schools, which unnecessarily prolongs the time given to the elements of these two branches, and fetters the progress and dwarfs the power of our children.

Intelligent and sagacious men do not allow their progress thus to be impeded, and their plans foiled by a deprivation of those instrumentalities and tools within their reach. The farmer cannot afford, as he says, to cut his grass or grain with the scythe or the sickle, but provides the mower and reaper or cradle for himself, as he does the patent churn and sewing-machine for his wife; and he relies upon the accomplishment of an increased amount of work, with the same expenditure of time and labor, as an ample vindication of the wisdom of his course.

Precisely so in our schools; no community that desires the satisfactory instruction of its children, and values their time and the necessary expense of its school, can afford to forego the use of those articles of apparatus that easily double the efficiency of instruction that may be imparted within a given time. To the objections that are commonly made, that teachers do not know how to use, and do not use apparatus that may be supplied, and that they will be destroyed by rough boys, it may be replied to the first objection that such teachers are incompetent, and ought not to be employed; and to the second, while the same reply is appropriate enough, it might also be said that the liability of this particular class of property to injury at the hands of unruly boys is no greater than is the liability of other kinds of property, and is really no objection whatever. No man refrains from planting fruit-trees because unruly boys sometimes steal apples. The protection of the

property of the district, whether it be the school house, its furniture or its apparatus, should be made the duty of every teacher ; and by making immediate reparation of any damages caused, or a suspension from school invariable and uniform alternatives throughout the State, all such property would soon be sufficiently protected.

It is earnestly to be desired that the disposition to provide for the schools necessary apparatus within certain reasonable limits, may increase and extend in our State. It may be doubted whether such a mean and beggarly inventory of articles so necessary for the advancement of the schools would now be returned from any other free State in the Union.

Teachers may do very much to provide their schools with globes, maps, &c., by personal effort and activity. A personal solicitation addressed by a teacher to parents, a subscription to be presented by the children to their fathers, a public examination of the school with a small admission fee, are some of the methods which have been successfully adopted by enterprising teachers, and are now commended to all.

It may not be amiss, in this connection, to note that a mistaken notion is prevalent,—that the Prudential Committee has no legal power to purchase a globe, a dictionary or a set of maps, without special instruction and direction of the district by vote in school meeting. This is not so : when a person is appointed Prudential Committee, there are certain general duties prescribed by law which he is bound to discharge. It is made the duty of the Prudential Committee, by law, “to see that fuel, furniture, and all apparatus and things necessary for the advantage of the School be provided,” &c. The Prudential Committee needs no special direction to empower him to procure any articles of apparatus such as maps, globes, dictionaries, &c., provided that, in his judgment, they are necessary “for the advantage of the school.”

A STATE NORMAL SCHOOL.

From year to year the reports of the Superintendents and educational discussions of the various associations have urged the desirability and the expediency of the establishment of a State Normal School ; and the opinion is quite generally held by many of the most intelligent friends of education, that such a school would be well attended, and would operate immediately and powerfully in the improvement of our schools. There can be little doubt in the minds of any that such a school, un-

der favorable circumstances, if well sustained by a general favorable sentiment, and well attended by our teachers, would furnish a class of teachers better qualified as instructors, and would do much through the models of thorough teaching that would be exhibited by its graduates, to advance and elevate the standard of qualification that would generally be required of our teachers. But many have had doubts, notwithstanding this, whether the time has yet arrived in our State to make the establishment of a State Normal School an object of definite and concerted effort on the part of the friends of education.

I have never urged this topic to any great extent upon the consideration of the Board, for reasons that have seemed sufficient, and still seem to avail to warrant the propriety of the course taken. Having visited the Normal Schools of other States, and having been quite favorably impressed by an observation of their means and methods of instruction, I have not yet been able clearly to see that a concession of the wisdom of the establishment of Normal Schools for the specific training of teachers as applicable to other States under their own peculiar circumstances, did conclusively vindicate the propriety of the adoption of the same policy in every other State, whatever may be its own educational situation and circumstances.

The educational position of our own State is, of course, to some extent peculiar, and requires characteristic and perhaps peculiar treatment. Our State is abundantly able, in a pecuniary sense, to adopt and efficiently support any educational system or school establishment that may commend itself to the approval of the good sense of our people. In this respect she will compare favorably with other States; but in relation to certain educational movements she occupies a different position from that, for instance, of Massachusetts. There education for a great number of years has occupied a prominent, if not the leading, position, as a topic of thought, of discussion and of legislation. For more than half a century, at least, the improvements of the public schools has been a topic which has largely occupied the attention and enlisted the efforts of the ablest men of Massachusetts, and of men occupying the most prominent positions in political, social and legislative circles. The public mind has been fully stirred and agitated; every step of progressive advancement and improvement has resulted from a severe struggle; opposition and indifference have been fairly conquered after an obstinate, long continued and well fought contest. For some thirty consecutive years the facts in

regard to the situation and wants of the schools have been annually spread, by official report, before the public, till an opposition far stronger and more bitter than was ever known in our State has been overcome, if not silenced. Thus the general public sentiment, from the able and continued discussion of each particular phase of the whole great subject, is necessarily better informed and better prepared to receive with resignation, if not with welcome, any measures dictated by an enlightened educational policy, than it can be in other States where less discussion has prevailed.

But in our own State, official and State supervision beginning in 1848-9, ceased in 1851, and was only revived in 1856. And it is only within the last six years that any success has been attained in the annual collection and dissemination of accurate information in relation to the schools; and as yet, the discussion of means and measures for the improvement of our schools has been mainly confined to those actually engaged in teaching, the town Superintendents and the State officials. The time has not yet apparently arrived when our Vermont Everetts, Websters, Rantouls, Sumners and Emersons are willing to jeopardize their political standing by an earnest, active and sincere advocacy of the cause of popular education.

In these, as in other respects differing in educational position, it does not, by any means, follow that an educational policy that is adapted to the wants of the one State, would be equally appropriate and successful in the other.

We have arrived at a point in our educational progress in this State where we shall find it necessary to give much and thoughtful consideration to two great and inevitable educational topics: one is the one I have just been referring to, the expediency and desirability of the establishment of a State Normal School, and the other is, what is the best system of local supervision of our public schools. While neither desiring, nor indeed prepared for a careful consideration, in the present report, of either of the topics mentioned, I am fully aware that such consideration must and will soon be had. I have been favored with a communication submitting a plan for the establishment of a State Normal School, from an earnest and successful teacher, who is a Vermonter, that has been educated at one of the Normal Schools in Massachusetts, and is now engaged as Principal in one of the High Schools in that State. The author may well be supposed to know the character and distinguishing excellencies of schools of that description. I here insert his communication.

PLAN FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT AND ENDOWMENT OF A NORMAL SCHOOL IN VERMONT.

This plan proposes :

First.—That the sum of one hundred thousand dollars be raised, to constitute a permanent fund for the endowment of a Normal School in Vermont.

The income (six thousand dollars) will be sufficient to support the School.

Second.—That this sum (\$100,000) be divided into shares of fifty dollars each,—producing two thousand shares.

Third.—That one share of fifty dollars shall constitute a scholarship, and each shareholder shall be entitled to send one pupil through the course for each share he holds; or he may, at his option, dispose of his stock to another, who may claim the same privileges as the original holder.

Fourth.—That fifteen years be allowed for claiming the scholarships, and after that period no preference shall be given to the shareholders. This will tend to fill the school at once, and thus the State will more quickly reap the advantages to be derived from such a school, and an increased public interest will be the result.

Fifth.—That sixty dollars shall be the tuition of non-shareholders during the first fifteen years. This arrangement will create a call for scholarships, from those who desire to become members, to the original shareholders; and as these can be sold at an advance of from five to ten dollars, it will aid in disposing of the original stock.

It also *supposes* :—

Sixth.—That the School may safely be calculated to average one hundred and fifty pupils.

Seventh.—That at least one-half of the original stockholders will relinquish their claims to scholarships, so that after fifteen years the tuition will be reduced to little or nothing.

Eighth.—That there are towns in Vermont which will, in consideration of the permanent location of this School in their limits, furnish the necessary buildings without expense to the corporation, and that from such towns one might be selected.

Ninth.—That, as in other States, book publishers will gratuitously furnish the school with text-books, as by so doing they tend largely to increase their circulation.

This plan also *suggests* :

That the Legislature of the State appropriate twenty-five thousand dollars to be paid to the corporation as soon as the other seventy-five thousand has been subscribed.

SUMMARY.

Salary of Principal,.....	\$1,500
" " 1st Assistant,.....	1,200
" " 2d "	1000
" " 3d "	800
" " 4th "	600
Total Salaries,.....	\$5,100
Incidentals,.....	900
Total,.....	\$6,000

1. Income of \$100,000 is \$6,000.
 2. 2,000 shares at \$50 each is \$100,000.
 3. A share of \$50 constitutes a scholarship.
 4. 15 years for claiming scholarships.
 5. \$60 constitute scholarship for non-shareholders.
 6. 150 pupils at \$25 per year is \$3,750.
 7. 15 years at \$37,50 " " " \$56,250.
- { \$100,000-\$56,250 is \$43,750.
 { 150 pupils at \$25 per year would, in less than 12 years,
 { cancel the \$43,750

Valuation of Vermont (1860) \$101,481,833.
 \$100,000 is less than a tenth of .01 (one per cent).

Such is the plan, and I heartily commend it to the attention of the friends of education in our State. Not being myself as yet entirely convinced of the propriety of an immediate effort to establish a State Normal School, I yet have a great and sincere respect for the opinions of many who are earnest advocates of such a course; and I hope that the suggestions of the above plan may result in a discussion that shall terminate in some decided policy.

Educational reports and addresses that have hitherto favored Normal Schools, have contained, as a general thing, rather the statements of the particular friends of such a system, than a full discussion of the merits and demerits of the policy involved; and there are facts and reasons that have been and

might again be cited which tend to throw some doubt upon the soundness of the conclusions generally reached. Having entirely abstained from any discussion of the topic, it may not be amiss now to state the reasons that have induced the course taken, as they may tend to widen and enlarge the benefits of any discussion that may ensue.

Such discussion has hitherto been avoided then because, in the first place, owing to the want of sufficient preceding discussion, it was believed that there was not yet such state of preparation in the public mind as would give any reasonable probability of success to the effort to establish a State Normal School were an effort in that direction really made; and, notwithstanding the truth that it will be the duty of the advocates of improvement, whether in a moral or social direction, often to become the opposers of prevalent opinions and customs, and the supporters of unpopular notions; it has been hitherto a guiding and controlling maxim of the Board and its Secretary never to make an earnest and strenuous effort to change the educational policy of the State without some reasonable prospect of success.

In the second place, wherever Normal Schools have been established, there never has been an entire unanimity of opinion in their favor: but a large proportion of intelligent friends of education,—constituting probably a minority, but a very respectable minority,—have, even after a thorough trial of the merits of the State Normal School system, doubted the expediency, economy, and efficiency of such policy, although not having command of general access to the public mind, these doubts have not been generally known.

In the third place, if the merits of the State Normal School system be generally admitted it is not certain that the results aimed at and attained may not be reached as well by the use of other means, as for instance the partial endowment by the State of a limited number of incorporated academies, upon condition of their furnishing normal instruction to a certain number of teachers without fee or for a limited tuition. This policy has been adopted by several States, and like the Normal school system has its earnest advocates and opposers; and if it could be adopted in Vermont would promote the welfare of the public schools in other respects as well as in furnishing normal culture.

In the fourth place, it may be doubted whether the differences which the operation of a State Normal School system would

tend to cause between teachers who are and those who are not graduates of such schools, and the divisions and jealousies thus created, do not over-balance the benefits claimed to result therefrom.

In the fifth place, whatever the claimed or conceded merits of the system, they are not peculiar to State Normal Schools, so called, for it does not appear why a thoroughly well taught public graded school or academy will not give to its pupils as much improvement both in the theory and practice of teaching as can be done by any Normal School.

In the sixth place, the facts that graduates of Normal Schools remain unemployed in our midst, and that our own best qualified and competent teachers are annually compelled to seek employment and adequate remuneration in other States, show that probably in the event of the successful establishment of a State Normal State its graduates would not find employment in our own schools ; and therefore, that until a decided change of public sentiment occurs, the establishment of such schools commends itself rather as a measure of general philanthropy than of State policy, as it would result in no more benefit to our State than to others.

Such are some of the reasons that have prevented a previous discussion, in the annual reports, of this important topic, but now the time seems to have arrived when the general opinion of the State is demanding that some measures be taken to supply the schools with teachers who shall in some way have received specific training for their vocation, and the demand must ere long be met by the establishment of a State Normal School, or the adoption of other adequate measures.

THE VERMONT GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY.

The book selected by the Board in accordance with law, upon the Geography and History of the State has, in the course of the last year, been published, and though it has many imperfections, perhaps necessarily incident in a first edition published hastily as it was, though after a long delay, in its general design and character it seems to meet with a cordial reception. It will be remembered by the Board that as the general provision of the law which requires special instruction in the Geography and History of the State to be given in every school, also requires in the same clause special instruction to be given likewise in the constitution and principles of our government, it was deemed best, as a matter of convenience as well

as economy, to combine these several topics in one book, and this has been done. The book selected is a volume of some 266 pages, and contains the Geography and History of the State, by Rev. S. R. Hall; the Constitution of the United States, with notes and explanations by Rev. Pliny H. White; the Bill of rights and Constitution of Vermont; the Declaration of Independence; the Ordinance of '87; a tabular and historical view of the relative rank in population of the different states; and a succinct description of the functions of the different departments of the General Government; and will be found a very convenient little volume of general reference as well as a valuable text-book in the schools. The first edition was quite a small one, consisting, I think, of only five thousand copies, and will soon without doubt be followed by others in which present errors and omissions will be corrected.

Since the beginning of the discussion in the State which has resulted in a change of the general law requiring specific instruction to be given in the Constitution, Geography and History of the State, several other States have taken measures towards the adoption of the same policy. A thoughtful and intelligent appreciation of the intrinsic value and power of democratic institutions, and at least an elementary knowledge of the method of operation of a republican government, are most manifestly among the most indispensable qualifications of an intelligent and useful citizenship. The curious fact that, while the necessity for such knowledge has always been assumed as the logical basis on which the right to tax all property for the support of public free schools is made to rest, this special knowledge is almost the only specialty which the schools of our own and other States have made no effort to teach, is one of the most inexplicable facts attending our educational history.

The absurdity of neglecting these matters in the public schools seems at last to have made itself manifest to all, and all are now united in demanding that whatever be neglected in the public schools of the State, this important matter of teaching the children while young some appreciation of the truth and majesty of the leading principles of democracy, and of filling the young hearts with a warm, a strong and intelligent attachment to the land and State of their birth, and to its government and institutions, shall receive direct and earnest attention. The late terrible rebellion has taught us all many things, and among them all nothing more certainly and con-

vincingly than this, that the real and true power of our government consists, more than in arms and munitions and ordnance, in a general perception of the breadth and power and scope and justice of the fundamental principles of our government, and in an intelligent and patriotic determination to vindicate its adequacy to our political necessities.

THE AUTHORIZED LIST OF BOOKS.

The experiment made in 1859 to increase the efficiency and economy of the operation of our school system, by an authoritative selection of school text-books, has succeeded beyond the most sanguine expectations, even of its warmest friends. Such experiments had been met with only partial success elsewhere, and in many States had entirely failed; but the extent to which the expense of the schools had for many years been augmented by unnecessary and frequent change of school books, and the efficiency of the schools impaired by the multiplicity of classes which resulted directly and, as it appeared, inevitably from the multiplicity of text-books, warranted the making of a strong effort to remedy the evils, by the selection of a list of school text-books that should have some probability of a permanent tenure in the schools.

Upon investigation, there appeared to be good reasons for the failures that had attended similar efforts in the State. In some the nature of the laws establishing an authentic list of books was of so arbitrary a nature, that, on this account an opposition was immediately created thereby, strong enough to defeat the successful operation of the law in actual operation. In other States the law was so administered as to create a sort of book monopoly that was repulsive to the general sense, and of course, this secured the repeal of the law after a short time.

After the passage of the law directing the Board of Education to make a selection of books for the use of the schools, it was seen that the nature of the law which, while it was imperative and binding upon the Board and Superintendents and teachers, left an acquiescence with its provisions to the voluntary option and good sense of the parents and citizens, without any attempt whatever of compulsion upon them, was such as to relieve it entirely from all imputation of arbitrariness; and that if the law could be so administered as to cause the least possible expense, and avoid all tendency to the creation of any

monopoly in school books, it would have a fair prospect of success.

It was then manifestly the true policy of the Board, as it was for the benefit of the schools, to avoid these two great sources of difficulty and opposition; and a pre-determination to avoid them was the leading feature of the course of the Board in making the selection which they did. Determining then, to make no change of books in any of the various branches of study where the books themselves, though perhaps not the best in the opinion of the Board, were of a fair degree of excellence and sufficient for the schools, and were already in use in the schools to any very considerable extent; and also resolving to make the selection in such a manner as to avoid all appearance of monopoly, they proceeded to choose the list. Giving public notice of the time and place of their meeting for the purpose, publishers of school books were invited to attend, and some thirty different houses, by themselves or their agents, did attend. The peculiar merits of the different books were set forth by their proprietors, and then declining to eject from the schools books that were in general use and were tolerably acceptable, they made a selection of books for the schools, having reference to all the important considerations, of intrinsic value, general use, and the prices at which the books could be furnished, in such a way as to distribute the list among as many different publishing houses as was practicable under all the circumstances. And in inquiring concerning the prices, the query was as to the prices at which the books would be furnished to the book sellers of the State, thus endeavoring to avoid any unnecessary and unadvisable change of the channels of the regular book trade. The list thus made became, immediately upon publication, of binding force upon the Board, Superintendents and teachers, and went into practical operation. At first no clause of the revised school law met with so savage and determined opposition, but in less than eighteen months this opposition almost entirely ceased, and now for several years scarce a word of opposition to the policy of the law has been heard, although many good teachers and friends of the school have, and with good reason, objected to the character of some of the books selected; but knowing the reasons which influenced their selection and the difficulties that always must attend the operation of a law of this nature, have quietly submitted to the law, hoping that whenever a new selection should be made, better books would be substituted.

The operation of the law may be said to have given general satisfaction within the State, and has attracted much attention in other States, and not only has it been well spoken of by the educational officials of other States and recommended for imitation as the simplest and most effectual known law upon this subject, but attempts have at different times been made to secure its adoption elsewhere.

From the very absence of compulsion in the law, it can only slowly come into general operation, and it has increased the sphere of its practical operation as rapidly as could have been anticipated. It has also operated favorably upon the schools, diminishing the diversity of books, and the multiplication of classes, and thus increasing the efficiency of the instruction given, and at the same time has saved a large and useless expenditure of money in the purchase of unnecessary books, and has delivered the people and the schools from one of the greatest pests of times subsequent to the departure of the children of Israel from the land of the Nile, a class of wandering, mercenary and persistent book agents, from whom it has very effectually taken their vocation.

It is believed that it is demonstrably true that the single clause of the revised school law providing for an authentic list of school text-books has saved to the people of the State a useless expenditure annually of more than \$20,000.

The time limited for the continuance of the list of books selected expired by limitation of the original law in 1864, but this time has by act of Legislature been extended to 1867, and this without recommendation of the Board or any solicitation from the agents of the State, thus giving convincing testimony of the general satisfaction both with the law and its practical operation.

I have been informed within the past year that the agents of certain houses are diligently endeavoring to create dissatisfaction with the law and the selection of books made under it. If the effort is simply for the purpose of securing in advance favorable consideration for the books published by those firms as preparatory to the new selection that may possibly be made in 1867,—it may not be considered very objectionable; but if it is made for the purpose of inducing general dissatisfaction with, and direct disregard of existing laws of the State, it will generally, I trust, be met as it has in several instances, with the declaration from those connected with the schools officially, that while the law stands it should be observed by every friend of education.

When the time arrives for the revision of the list, and the Board are called upon to act in making another selection, it is quite probable that persistent efforts on the part of any publishing house to induce a violation of the existing law, will operate to exclude that house from participation in any benefits that may ensue from such selection.

TOWN EDUCATIONAL LIBRARIES.

How may we with the most economy, certainty and rapidity, improve our schools? This is the question to which it is the main business of the Board of Education and of its agents to find satisfactory responses; and it is a question which addresses itself with emphasis, not only to every parent, the character of whose children is in great measure dependent upon the character of the public schools, but to every intelligent citizen and to every tax-payer. Schools we shall always have while our republic endures, and these schools will be more and more dependent upon direct taxation for their support; and, in an age that is characteristically progressive and given to improvement in every other direction, a constant effort to improve the scope and effectiveness of the schools is inevitable, and in proportion to the success of this effort and the improvement secured will the necessary expenses of the schools be increased. In view, then, of the great present expense of supporting the schools as they are, and of the certain prospect of an increase in the amount of work which the schools will accomplish, and of the money that will be required to sustain them, it becomes a matter of pecuniary, as well as of moral and social importance, that a common effort be made to add to their efficiency by the use of every means that gives reasonable promise of success. It is true everywhere and under all circumstances, that whatever increases the power and enlarges the capacity of the teacher must necessarily add to the value and elevate the character of the school. This general truth applies to the schools of our own State with special force, on account of peculiarities to which reference has been often made. The teachers of our public schools as a class, are quite young, younger it is believed than the teachers of any other of the Eastern States; because, the rate of compensation here being less, and permanent employment in a given school being exceptional, the older and more experienced teachers are continually seeking higher wages and more permanent engagements elsewhere. Thus young,

our teachers have less of the skill that comes from experience on the one hand, and on the other are far more likely to accept and adopt such improvements in the measures and methods of teaching and governing as are demonstrably worthy of acceptance. Long experience in teaching, while it gives a certain kind of tact and skill that are of great value and can come from no other source, does also, beyond question, in many instances disincline the teacher to vary at all from the stereotyped methods of instruction to which from long use he has become attached. This fact, which is universally known, is exceedingly unfortunate, because in no direction whatever, and in connection with no topic whatever, have greater advances been made within the last thirty years, than in the theory and practice of giving instruction in the elements of knowledge, unless perhaps we except one or more of the physical sciences which can scarcely be said to have existed previously to that time. The statement is often made that the schools of the present day are no better than were those of forty years ago ; but nevertheless, it is true beyond a question that in the better common schools of our own State, as of other States, many children of twelve and thirteen years of age have a more valuable knowledge of Geography, are more proficient in intellectual Arithmetic, and understand more fully the practical application both in writing and speaking of the principles of English Grammar, and have a greater developement of the reasoning powers, than was attained in the best existing schools of forty years ago by pupils of sixteen and eighteen, unless in now and then an exceptional instance. The true philosophy of teaching, the natural order of development of the various faculties, and the correct theory of school government, are much better understood than formerly, and a steadily progressive improvement, in topics of study, in methods of instruction and of discipline, and in the means and instrumentalities by which these methods are made effective, is plainly and generally perceptible.

It thus becomes a matter of the greatest moment in every point of view that the comparatively young and inexperienced teachers of our schools should have an opportunity to become acquainted with all the real and true improvements in means and methods that have approved themselves to the judgment of the best teachers. With no State provision for normal training and comparatively few graded and High Schools upon which they can rely, our young teachers must depend for improvement in their methods upon the wisdom gained from

their own experience, or upon such knowledge as can be acquired from the writings of experienced and successful teachers, or their personal intercourse with them. Now, although books upon the subject of education in all its various phases have abounded in latter years, but comparatively few of the best of this class are accessible to the teachers employed in our schools. The demand for books of this description has been so exceedingly small that, with a few exceptions, they are never found in general circulation, and can seldom be obtained in the book stores of the State. And if such books were commonly and easily accessible, the compensation of our teachers is so small that it would be almost impossible for the larger proportion of them to buy them.

Yet books of this description, not exceeding a dozen in number, could easily be selected by one competent to choose, a careful study of which would certainly double the power in the schools of more than half the teachers of our State. When at the Teachers' Institutes, by exhibiting a selection of a few of the most practical and useful books upon education, an opportunity has been given to examine them, it has been exceedingly interesting to witness the interest and avidity with which their contents have been scrutinized, and with what earnestness inquiries have been made as to the best method of procuring them. Very many of the younger and many of the older teachers would be glad to avail themselves of opportunities to read and profit by such means of self-improvement if offered. On this account I desire again to recommend, as I have often done before, the establishment of Town Educational Libraries, as a cheap, and very hopeful means of furnishing to the teachers opportunities of self-culture. A library of educational books that would not cost more than \$60, might easily be selected that, if a sufficient stimulus were afforded by the local sentiment of each town to encourage and urge their perusal, would become a very powerful agency for good, operating through the teachers upon the schools. The experiment has in several localities been tried and always with the most beneficial and satisfactory results. The School Registers for several years have contained a small list of educational books that, though not very expensive, are practical and useful and are recommended as a nucleus for libraries of the kind referred to. The funds necessary for the procurement of such a library could easily be raised in almost any locality in this State if one or two individuals would undertake the work, and the very

subscription for such a purpose would excite an interest in the parents that would favorably affect the schools; and if such a nucleus should perchance expand into a local general Town Librarie, no harm could ensue. Free Libraries, accessible to all under proper regulations, are among the most unobjectionable, innocent and reliable instrumentalities that ever have existed for general improvement.

I most earnestly and heartily commend the formation of Town Educational Libraries to all friends of education.

TEACHERS' ASSOCIATIONS.

Very much of improvement has resulted to the teachers of schools from the various Town, County and State Teachers' Associations which have sprung into existence mainly within the last ten years. Such Associations, entirely voluntary and self-sustaining in their character, by gathering together those actually engaged in the vocation of teaching, for the consideration of topics connected with education in all its many relations to parents, teachers, citizens and the communities, have exercised a very beneficent influence in various directions, and by different means. The Town Associations have been very diverse in character, but seldom have failed to affect the schools generally. Sometimes they have originated in an entirely spontaneous movement on the part of the teachers themselves, who have united in holding meetings, now in one school-house, now in another, and inviting the parents to participate, have by an interchange of views, and a comparison of methods, not only accomplished much in mutual improvement, but have awakened a new interest on their own part in their calling, and have stirred the sympathy and secured the co-operation of the parents. Sometimes the Town Superintendent has called the teachers together and suggesting the propriety of securing the intervention of associated effort has himself taken a leading part in the formation of an educational society for mutual improvement. It has been often the case that such an interest has been awakened that some of the school-houses would be found too small to contain the audiences that would gather together, attracted solely by the exercises of the Association. A sketch of the character, operation and effects of an Association of this character may be found in the report of Dr. Hyde, the very efficient Superintendent of Hardwick, quoted in this report, to which I venture to ask particular attention.

The County Associations are composed mainly of the teachers of the schools in the County, of those who have been teachers, and of those particularly interested in the schools, and are generally larger, and often are quite numerous attended. The exercises consist of essays, addresses and practical discussions of methods of instruction in the various branches. They are not generally permanently located, but move about from town to town for successive meetings, thus bringing together audiences from the different towns in succession, and so after a time widening the sphere of their influence and extending the scope of their operation.

The State Teachers' Association, consisting of representatives from the schools of every grade and kind in all parts of the State, has in later years rapidly increased in numbers and in influence, and annually gathers a numerous and very intelligent audience of thoughtful and earnest friends of education, and has exerted a very perceptible and favorable effect upon the public sentiment of the State. As yet it has been difficult to attract the attention and enlist the co-operation of influential men outside of the school, and the pulpits; but an improvement in this particular begins to be apparent, and ere long, affording audiences that any man might be glad to address, the eminent men in political and social life will be ready to give their presence and their assistance, as is done in other States, and still more beneficent effects will be perceived.

From the very nature of these Associations, dependent entirely upon the voluntary support of the teachers, and relying mainly upon the efforts of those actually engaged in teaching for their capacity to furnish instruction and entertainment, they draw out, and by drawing out, give opportunity for development, to much intellectual capacity that otherwise might remain forever latent, and thus do much for the education of teachers as a class. They also do very much in preparing the general public sentiment of the people to co-operate with the agencies which the State employs in the work of education, and thus add powerfully to their efficiency. They also stimulate inquiry and arouse a spirit of investigation and scrutiny into the value and real worth of present and prospective movements in the field of educational labor, and thus tend to make all such movements to be more carefully conceived and more cautiously and therefore more safely executed, and in this way exercise a very beneficial influence. I have always been ready and glad to acknowledge my own sense of obligation,

as one of the agents of the State, to all such Associations for the very valuable aid rendered, and desire heartily and pointedly to ask for them the favorable consideration of all. They are among the most inexpensive, safe and valuable agencies within our reach, and their encouragement and multiplication is very desirable.

So highly are these Associations valued in the commonwealth of Massachusetts that by the general law of that State, they are entitled to the pecuniary assistance of the government, and the example is entirely worthy of imitation in other States. In chap. 35, of the General Statutes of Massachusetts are the following provisions.

Sec. 4. "When a County Association of teachers and others holds semi-annual meetings of not less than two days each, for the express purpose of promoting the interests of public schools, it shall receive fifty dollars a year from the commonwealth.

Sec. 5. "Upon the certificate under oath of the President and Secretary of such Association to the Governor, that two semi-annual meetings have been held in accordance with the provisions of the preceding section, he shall draw his warrant in favor of such association for the sum aforesaid."

MODIFICATIONS OF LAW RECOMMENDED. ✓

I recommend to your Hon. Board that an effort be made to procure the following modifications of existing laws:

1st. A restoration of the provision of law as it existed prior to the last revision, requiring each District Clerk to make a list of the families and resident children in each district on the first day of January annually.

2nd. The enactment of law by which district clerks may charge to their districts a reasonable sum for their labor in the procurement of statistics pursuant to law.

3d. The enactment of law by which it shall be made unlawful to pay any compensation to a teacher for his services as such, who fails to keep the records required by law to be kept in the school register of his school.

4th. The enactment of law by means of which the Town Superintendent of schools, on revoking the certificate of a teacher, shall be required to file in the town clerk's office a written statement of the reasons of such revocation.

5th. The enactment of law by which power shall be given to towns, so electing to do, to abolish all district organizations

within their bounds, take possession of and account for all district property, pay all district debts, and in their municipal capacity assume all ordinary functions and perform all ordinary duties of districts.

The first three modifications are suggested in order to improve and make more thorough and reliable the existing system for the collection of statistical information. The necessity of reliable information in order to secure safe and wholesome legislation in behalf of the public schools has been so often presented that it will not again be urged here; and, if such importance be conceded, the manifest tendency of the modifications of law suggested to secure a more faithful discharge of duty on the part of teachers and district clerks, who are the prominent agents in the collection and preservation of the required statistical knowledge, will sufficiently vindicate the propriety of the change of law suggested.

The third modification is necessary in order to secure the efficacy of the statistical arrangement already made, because, notwithstanding the requirement of the law, that the teacher shall fill out his portion of the school register "previous to the receipt of his wages," a recent decision of the Supreme Court seems to dispense with the full discharge of his statistical duties as pre-requisite to any legal payment of his wages. Under a similar system in a sister State, it has been found necessary to fortify and give point to the general language of the law, by a special enactment requiring a specific discharge of the duty referred to under penalty. The enactment is as follows:—

"The several school teachers shall faithfully keep the Registers furnished to them and make due return thereof to the school committee, or such person as they may designate, and no teacher shall be entitled to receive payment for services until the Register, properly filled up and completed, shall be so returned."

The fourth modification of law is suggested in order to put as effectual a guard as possible against either rashness, or undue and despotic severity in the exercise by the Superintendent of the power of revoking the certificate of a teacher under certain circumstances and for certain specific causes. The power itself is harsh and somewhat arbitrary in its nature, and it is necessarily so; but such being its nature, there will often be danger of its non-exercise, however necessary on account of its apparent severity on the one hand, and of its improper exercise in possible cases when some degree of undue personal feel-

ing may have mingled itself, unwittingly perhaps, with the motives that have led to the revocation of a teacher's certificate. In several instances cases have occurred within the last two or three years that have demonstrated the advisability of throwing some safe-guard around the exercise of this necessary power. It is believed that the protection suggested will be at once quiet and entirely effective, while it will add to, rather than impair, the real force of the law in regard to revocation. On the one hand a Superintendent whose written statement of the reasons that led him to sever the legal connection between a teacher and his school, is to be placed on file in a public office and be open to the inspection of every one interested in any way in the schools will be apt to proceed with great caution in any case requiring his official intervention; and on the other, the prospective lodgement in the Town Clerk's office of a detailed statement of reasons leading to the possible revocation of a certificate, will tend to induce teachers to more than common faithfulness.

The fifth modification of law is suggested to endeavor to turn general attention towards the great and unjust inequality of taxation caused to different individuals by the operation of the existing school system. Towns have always had supreme control of the territorial extension of school districts, and this function has frequently been exercised with far less consideration generally, and particularly with less special reference to the equalization of all taxes necessary in the support of the public schools, than the importance of consequences that must necessarily result, would seem to have deserved. In consequence of this, school districts throughout the State will be found to differ widely in both numerical and pecuniary strength. This necessarily causes an inequality of necessary taxation that bears often with exceeding severity upon a portion of the pupils. It will be often found, in the same town, that one district will have a Grand List ten times as large as will be the list of another district. Hence, in this case, the one district, for fuel, for erecting or repairing the school-house, or to defray any other necessary expense, will of course be compelled to levy ten times as large a tax upon the Grand List, as is required in the stronger districts. The object of the modification is to require the leading expenses of supporting schools, to be paid, if a town so elects, by a general tax upon the whole property of the town. This would require each man to contribute, precisely according to his pecuniary ability to sus-

tain the necessary burden, towards defraying the expenses of the free schools. Beside the manifest propriety and justice of such requirement, it is worthy of notice, that such requirement that the town, if they so elect, should in common be taxed for the expenses of school, would tend very strongly towards the diminution of district organizations, a decrease of the number of school-houses, an enlargement of the size of the schools, and therefore would exert a powerful influence in economizing the general expenditure for the public schools, and at the same time, by thus doing, would vastly increase their efficiency.

And now, leaving many topics of equal interest and importance untouched, and with an expectation, from certain significant indications, that the approaching session of the Legislature will be one of unusual importance to the educational progress of the State, with a feeling of gratification at the progress made since the organization of the Board, and of entire hopefulness as to the future, I feel constrained by the propriety of bringing this report to a close to leave the whole subject to the known interest and care of your Honorable Board.

J. S. ADAMS, Secretary.

T E N T H
ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

VERMONT BOARD OF EDUCATION,

WITH THE

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY

MADE TO THE BOARD

SEPTEMBER, 1866.

BURLINGTON:
TIMES BOOK AND JOB OFFICE.

1866.



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REPORT OF THE BOARD.

To the Honorable the Legislature of the State of Vermont :

GENTLEMEN :

In submitting their Tenth Annual Report, the Board of Education are happy to have it in their power to say that the common schools of Vermont continue to be in a thriving, and, in many respects, satisfactory condition. The facts which justify this representation appear at large in the accompanying Report of the Secretary of the Board ; and they indicate that there is an unabated popular interest in our school system, and a steady, though not rapid, improvement in the schools themselves. This improvement does not, indeed, equal the desires of their friends, but it is an ample reward for past labors, and an urgent incentive to future and more vigorous efforts.

Referring to the Secretary's Report for exact information as to the present condition of the schools, and for the discussions suggested by that information, the Board desire to call attention to one subject which they regard as of vital importance—a higher standard of qualifications for school teachers. This subject is rendered specially important at the present time by two considerations.—The number of experienced teachers, particularly of male teachers, is probably smaller now than at any previous time for many years. Many of them have laid down their lives for the country, and others have been diverted into more lucrative employments. Besides this, the same causes have operated in other States to reduce the number of their teachers, and they are seducing some of our best teachers by the offer of wages twice or three times as large as any of our school districts, except some of the largest and most liberal, are willing to pay. As the result of all which, there is a large present, and larger prospective deficiency of the best qualified teachers; and there is urgent need of measures by which a new supply of such teachers may be prepared for service and called into it.

The lack of such teachers always has been, and still is, the great practical difficulty in the way of improving our common schools. "As is the teacher, so is the school." To a degree which it is hardly possible to estimate aright, he molds the social, intellectual, and moral character of the youth who are committed to his charge. They look to him as their guide and exemplar, and in following him they feel safe. To attain an equality with him in intellectual stature and culture is the highest ambition of very many of them. If his intellectual stature is low, and his culture scanty, few of them can reasonably be expected to aspire to any greater excellence. They will not be likely to rise above the standard that is set before them; for though they may have vague longings for something higher and better, that standard will be continually drawing their thoughts and attention downwards. The unconscious influence, then, which the teacher thus exerts,—to say nothing of his direct efforts at instruction—makes it desirable that his qualifications shall be the highest that are attainable. The better the teacher, the better the school. To elevate him is to elevate all who are under his tuition. Efforts for the improvement of teachers will tell powerfully upon the improvement of schools, and in no other direction will a given amount of effort operate so efficiently in advancing the main enterprise.

The substantial reason why many teachers fail, wholly or partially, is that they have had no specific training for their peculiar duties. If there is any one employment which imperiously demands a specific and thorough process of preparation, it is that of developing the youthful mind, of directing its unfolding power, and disciplining them so that they shall be most available for the usefulness and happiness of him who possesses them and for the good of the world. To engage in such a work as that, without preparation, is worse than folly; it is wickedness. If he who attempts to practice law without having fitted himself by protracted study is branded with the derisive epithet of "pettifogger," if he who rushes from the plow-tail or the shoemaker's bench into the sacred desk is regarded with mingled feelings of pity and contempt, in what estima-

tion is he to be held who undertakes the work of teaching, a work second only in responsibility and importance, to that of preaching the gospel, with no preparation at all, or with the very scantiest apology for preparation. Or, not to speak with undue severity, in what estimation would he deserve to be held, if the means of preparation were furnished, and he refused to use them? In the majority of cases, it has perhaps been the misfortune rather than the fault of the teacher, that he has not had the necessary training.

It is true that the necessity of any special preparations for the employment of teaching has been denied, on the ground that whatever the teacher knows he can impart to others. But that position is unsound in theory and untrue in fact. It goes on the erroneous supposition that education is the mere transmission of knowledge from one mind to another. That is doubtless a part, but not the chief part of education. By far the most important work which the teacher has to do is to so develop the faculties of his pupils that they shall be able to acquire knowledge for themselves, digest it, and put it to practical use. To do that work well, does not the teacher need much more than mere knowledge, however profound it may be, of the branches of learning which he is required to teach? Does he not need a thorough acquaintance with the laws of mind and of the workings of the mind, does he not need to know how to put his own mind in contact with the pupils? Does he not need to be fitted for his work by a special training? As a matter of fact, there is only a small proportion of untrained teachers who can communicate their own knowledge to others, with facility and success. No observation is more common in regard to one engaged in teaching than—"He knows enough, but he doesn't seem to have any faculty to teach." How should he when that faculty has never been disciplined and cultivated? There are exceptional cases, indeed, in which native tact answers the purpose of such discipline and cultivation, but those exceptional cases are few, far too few to meet the necessities of our schools. And even those, the very best of them, would doubtless derive great advantages from a course of special training.

In making these remarks, the Board do not ignore the evident fact, that the teachers of our common schools are as a body, much better qualified for their work than were their predecessors of twelve or fifteen years ago. There has been a manifest and very gratifying improvement, which the Board is glad to see and to acknowledge. But that very improvement has been due, in no small measure, to the special training, slight indeed in amount, but very potent for good, which the great majority of them have received. The Teachers' Institutes, which, during the past ten years, have been held annually in every county, have given valuable training in regard to the general management of schools, the best methods of instruction, and whatever else relates to the art of teaching as a distinctive part of a teacher's qualifications. Those who have most faithfully availed themselves of the advantages of these Institutes are to-day numbered among the best teachers in the State. But those very teachers are they who, more than any others, are conscious of the need of still further training in the same direction. And the very fact that so much improvement has been secured by means of Teacher's Institutes, held only two or three days in the year, is the best possible proof how great improvement could be secured by the use of a similar agency employed for a greater length of time. The Teacher's Institute is a temporary substitute for the Normal School, and must eventually be superseded by it. The Institute imparts some practical skill in teaching, but for a thorough mastery of the science of education the Normal School is the only unfailing reliance.

The Normal School is at once the model of a good school, and the means by which good schools may be multiplied. Its plan embraces a thorough course of instruction in the studies pursued in common schools with special reference to teaching the same things to others. For this purpose, the chief stress of its instructions rests upon the art of teaching, including the knowledge of human nature and of the human mind; the method and order of calling into healthy exercise the various intellectual faculties. The motives by which to appeal to the mind and conscience of youth, and culti-

vate in them good habits of observation, acquisition and reflection and specially of reproducing their knowledge promptly, clearly and forcibly; the classification of scholars upon a correct basis; the means of securing order and obedience, and of maintaining a constant and lively interest in the daily exercises. It does for the future teacher what an apprenticeship to a master-workman does for the future mechanic, what the law-school or the clerkship in the office of an experienced attorney does for the law-student, what the theological seminary and the medical school do for the young clergyman and physician, what the Commercial College and the drill of the counting-room do for the future merchant. It teaches what to do, and how to do it. It applies to the business of teaching the same preparatory study and practice which universal common sense demands for every other employment. Now is there any reasonable ground of hope that teaching will ever be elevated to its proper rank as a learned profession, except by some such agency as this.

Whatever doubts may at any time have been entertained in regard to the usefulness of Normal Schools, and the expediency of maintaining them, such doubts no longer exist in well informed and thoughtful minds. The day of experiment with those schools has passed by. Wherever they have been established and well sustained, their uniform result has been the production of a superior order of teachers. In Massachusetts, where the first school of this kind in America was established nearly thirty years ago, and where four such schools are now in constant operation, they are specially declared to be "the most important organ for the advancement of teachers, and with them of the schools, and the most prolific of hopeful results." From Connecticut, from New York, from Pennsylvania, from Michigan, and from wherever else Normal Schools exists, the testimony to their inestimable value is uniform and decided. They are regarded as an indispensable part of a complete common school system, are maintained by liberal endowments, and fostered alike by popular approbation and official encouragement. In the judgment of the Board, the time has fully come when Vermont

should take her place beside her sister States in the maintenance of such a school. From the very beginning of the movement to improve our common schools, the desires and efforts of their friends have tended towards this consummation. Twenty years ago, the first Superintendent of Common Schools, in his first report, spoke of the great benefits which Massachusetts and New York were deriving from their Normal schools, and added,—“ Were it not that these institutions, being attended with greater expense, must be regarded as at present beyond our reach, the Superintendent would warmly urge their immediate establishment in this State. But, for the time being, it is believed that reliance must and may be placed upon the conjoined agency of Institutes and our ordinary means of instruction.” During the period which has since elapsed, similar views have repeatedly been brought before the Legislature, and presented to the popular mind, and there has arisen a general desire and expectation that our school system shall be perfected by the establishment of a Normal School. It is believed that the day has long since gone by, when such an institution “ must be regarded as beyond our reach,” because of its expense. The expense is not worthy to be named in view of the large resources of the State, and of the immense benefits to be received in return.

The Board are gratified to say that a very favorable opportunity now presents itself to establish such an institution in circumstances that will enable the State to secure all the advantages, with an outlay of expenses merely trifling in comparison with the expenses incurred by sister States. The trustees of Randolph Academy, one of the oldest and most flourishing of our literary institutions, propose to give the State the use of their school property for a term of years, for the purposes of a Normal School, requesting the Board of Education to appoint a Principal, arrange the courses of study, control the examinations for admission and graduation, and to exercise a general supervision by means of visits; and asking that those who pursue a full course of normal study and pass a satisfactory examination, shall receive from the Board certificates authorizing them to teach anywhere in the State, for a term of five years,

or for life. The labor of organizing and carrying on the school as a Normal School will be devolved upon the Principal and his assistants, who will depend for their compensation upon the receipts for tuition. By this arrangement, the State will receive all the advantages of the School, with no expense except the moderate expenses of official services rendered by the Board. The mere statement of this proposal is the best argument for the acceptance of it, and it is hoped that the Legislature will at once recognize this as the State Normal School, and enact such laws as may be necessary to secure the expected benefits.

One other subject requires to be briefly noticed. The time prescribed for the use of the text books heretofore selected by the Board and now used in the schools, expires on the first of January next. Unless some new legislation takes place, the way will be left open for the introduction of any and all text books that publishers, teachers, or others may choose to introduce, and all the evils which naturally arise from a great diversity of books will speedily return upon our schools. The enactment of a law to secure a continued uniformity seems to be imperatively demanded. But it also seems desirable that the list of books should be carefully revised, and changes made, if any shall be found necessary to the best interests of the schools. The present list was established, not because it was thought to be, in all respects, the very best that could be selected, but because the books named in it were already in such extensive use that uniformity could more easily be secured by adopting them. But the additional experience of eight years has demonstrated that some of them are not so well suited to use in our schools as others of the same class that have since been published. The Board are advised from all parts of the State that there is general dissatisfaction with these books, and a strong desire for a change. With a view to the re-examination of them and the examination of others, the Board recommend the enactment of a law conferring on them the necessary authority to make and publish a new authoritative list of text-books, and that the present list shall be continued as authoritative till another shall be made.

To conclude, the Board do not deem it necessary to urge the duty of fostering our common school system by all judicious and needful means. In its most important features it is a Vermont system adapted to our people and to their circumstances. During the years of its existence in the present form, it has steadily gained strength and usefulness, overcoming difficulties that seemed almost insuperable, conquering ancient and deeply rooted prejudices, and establishing itself more and more firmly in the favor of the people. State pride and due regard to the State prosperity, alike demand that it shall be strongly sustained, kindly fostered, and promptly improved whenever the possibility of improvement shall appear. To enlarge and strengthen it to the very highest degree is one of the first and greatest duties of the representatives of the people; not one of whom will over-estimate his responsibility in this regard if he adopts the noble sentiment of the Prussian School Counselor: "I promised God that I would look upon every child as a being who could complain of me before God, if I did not provide for him the best education, as a man and a Christian, which it was possible for me to provide."

All which is respectfully submitted,

PAUL DILLINGHAM, *ex officio*,
A. B. GARDNER, " "
HILAND HALL, " "
PLINY H. WHITE,
MERRITT CLARK.

} Board
of
Education

Secretary's Report.



SECRETARY'S REPORT.

To the Honorable the Board of Education of the State of Vermont :

The law of the State provides that the Secretary of the Board shall

"—prepare and present to the Board of Education, on the first day of their annual session, a report of his official doings for the preceding year, and a statement of the condition of the common schools in the State; of the expenditures of the school monies therein; and such suggestions for improving their organization and modes of instruction, together with such other information in regard to systems of instruction in other States and Countries, as he shall deem proper."

In compliance with the above requirement of law, I now present the Tenth Annual Report of this department.

The official duties prescribed by law are so specifically pointed out in the law itself that, when fulfilled, they can vary but little from year to year. All of these duties have been attended to, pursuant to law, during the past year; the Registers were duly prepared and distributed, the Statistics collected, the Institutes held, and public meetings of the citizens addressed, as far as practicable; and, although my own sickness delayed the active discharge of my official duties for several weeks in the Fall of 1865, more than the ordinary time and labor has been expended. I have traveled in the performance of my official duty 4,927 miles during the past year.

TEACHERS' INSTITUTES.

A brief sketch of the several Institutes is all that will be expected in the Annual Report.

The first Institute was held in the Universalist Church at West Concord in the County of Essex on the 12th and 13th days of December. There are but five towns in this County where an Institute could be conveniently held, and although this was the third or fourth Institute that had been held in this locality, since the organization of the Board, the session was quite successful. The attendance both of teachers and citizens was good, and the warm interest hitherto shown in this community in the success of popular Education showed no diminution.

The Second Institute was held in the Congregational Church at Newport in the County of Orleans on the 15th and 16th of December. Here, at first, the attendance was exceedingly small, and the people of the locality seemed quite indifferent; but the subject as

presented seemed gradually to win its way and finally to commend itself to universal attention. Before the session closed, the attendance became quite large, even for a county in which a far more than ordinary interest in the progress of education is generally shown. The success of the two first Institutes was very much enhanced by the admirable lessons in Arithmetic and Reading given by Mr. B. F. Bingham, Principal of the Brattleboro High School, a very interesting and successful instructor.

The session of the third Institute occurred at Waterbury Centre on the 19th and 20th of December, and was held in the Baptist Church. This is a small village in a rather retired situation and was selected expressly to induce the attendance of a class of teachers and citizens not in the habit of frequenting such gatherings. The attendance of teachers though not large, was good, and a very good degree of interest seemed to be awakened. Valuable assistance in the Institute was given by Rev. Mr. Hibbard, the resident pastor and by the Rev. C. C. Parker of Waterbury, long one of our most efficient superintendents.

The fourth Institute was held in the Congregational Church at Milton in the County of Chittenden on the 22nd and 23rd days of December. The attendance of teachers here was very fair tho' not as large as might have been expected. Very few of the citizens were present during the session, and thus the Institute was deprived of its best opportunity of increasing the general interest in education. Dr. Plant the efficient town Superintendent, was a constant attendant, and in various ways contributed to the success of the session. Mr. Sanderson of the Essex Academy gave a very valuable address upon the proper method of conducting recitations. It is to be regretted that, in a county containing so many excellent teachers, there should not be a more general desire to co-operate with the State agencies for the improvement of the public schools.

The fifth Institute was held in the Congregational Church in Bakersfield, in the County of Franklin, on the 26th and 27th of December. This Institute was very largely attended by citizens and teachers from all parts of the County and may be considered one of the most useful and successful during the year. Rev. Mr. Wright, of Bakersfield, and Mr. Willet, Principal of the Academy, were very active in furthering in every way the purposes of the meeting, and gave valuable assistance in the performance of its work.

The sixth Institute was held on the 16th and 17th of January in the Congregational Church at Morrisville in the County of Lamoille. This was a very large gathering, both of teachers and others. Indeed it should be stated that nowhere in the State do the Institutes receive a warmer reception or a larger proportionate attendance than in the County of Lamoille. Rev. Mr. Bailey of Hyde Park

Rev. Mr. Bartlett of Morrisville, Rev. Mr. Dougherty of Johnson and Mr. Pearl, Principal of the Johnson Academy were present, sympathizing cordially and effectually assisting in making the session useful and thereby secured its success.

The seventh Institute was held in the Congregational Church at New Haven in the County of Addison on the 19th and 20th of January. For several years past the meetings held under the direction of the Board have been very largely attended in this County; and the session of the Institute here was no exception to the rule. The attendance of citizens and teachers was very large indeed, and a considerable number of the Superintendents of the various towns were also present. Connected by one purpose, and heartily co-operating in the promotion of a common interest, the exercises of the Institute were more than usually successful, and the meeting may fairly be considered one of the most useful that was ever held in the county. The Institute was largely indebted to Rev. C. B. Hurlburd, whose energy and activity were fully appreciated by all.

The eighth Institute was held in the Congregational Church at Grand Isle for the County of Grand Isle, on the 14th and 15th days of February. Here a larger proportion of the people within reasonable access was present than is often found. All parents, citizens, teachers and superintendents, seemed equally inspired with a deep interest in the general topic, and of course, a useful as well as pleasant session was the result.

The session of the ninth Institute began at Burke Hollow on the 29th day of May, A.D. 1866. This rather remote location was selected for the purpose of securing the attention of a people with whom an educational gathering would be a somewhat unfrequent event. The attendance, small at first, increased continually to the close, and was generally very good. Mr. Ide, Principal, of the St. Johnsbury High School was present and assisted in the labor of the session very acceptably. Mr. Conant, Principal of the Randolph Academy, always an instructive and judicious speaker, assisted in the discussion of Arithmetic and Grammar. The effect of the session seemed to be very good.

The tenth Institute was held at Chelsea in the County of Orange on the 1st and 2nd days of June. The session began in the Academy Hall, but the attendance of teachers and citizens increased so largely that a removal to the Congregational Church became necessary, and even there there was little room to spare. One of the first Institutes that was held under the direction of the Board was held in the year 1857 at Chelsea, and the attendance was very small, and indications denoted a very faint interest. The contrast both in attendance and in interest between the two Institutes was very striking, and is full of encouragement.

Mr. Conant again assisted as one of the Instructors, and the Institute was largely indebted to his exertions for its success. Mr. J. F. Manning of Boston, presented the subject of popular education as one of the most reliable and safe means of a true and proper reconstruction of Southern Society. And upon the whole the session may be considered a successful and useful one.

The eleventh Institute was held at North Bennington for the County of Bennington, in the Baptist Church. This Institute though not as large as some that have been held in this County, was yet quite numerously attended by citizens and teachers, and seemed animated by a right spirit and productive of good effects. Mr. L. A. Knights, Principal of North Bennington Academy, and Superintendent of Schools, with the energy and activity characteristic of him, in every practicable way devoted himself to the success of the session. It is believed that the Institute left a good impression after it.

The twelfth Institute was held at Danby, in the County of Rutland, on the 8th and 9th days of June. The Institutes for this County have for many years been among the largest and most spirited, and the present session conformed to the recent habit in this respect. The attendance of parents and tax-payers and of teachers was very large indeed, and the spirit and interest of the meeting, good at first, was well sustained throughout. The members of the Institute were much indebted for its comfortable accommodation to the unwearied exertions of Mr. Congdon, the former Superintendent.

The thirteenth Institute for Windsor County was held in the Baptist Church in Chester, on the 12th and 13th days of June. This was a very large gathering of teachers and friends of education, even for this County where the Institutes have for many years been very freely attended. The large church was filled to overflowing, and indeed the town itself seemed to be filled. Mr. Shaw, Principal of the Chester Academy was exceedingly active in procuring all necessary accommodation for the members in attendance, and this for more than two hundred strangers was no slight task, and also contributed essential aid in the discussions of the Institute. The Rev. Mr. Gurr, Town Superintendent was also very active in doing all that could be done to insure success, and the result was gratifying to all.

The fourteenth and last institute was held at Bellows Falls, for the County of Windham, in the Baptist Church, on the 15th and 16th days of June. Here also the attendance was very large both of teachers and friends of Education and of Town Superintendents. Mr. Shaw of Chester Academy, Mr. Dana of Windsor High School, Mr. Ward of Bellows Falls High School, and Mr. Bingham of Brattleboro, High School, were all present and assisted in the exercises

of the session. The teachers of Brattleboro were present in a body. I have never seen at an Institute in our State so strong an array of talent actually employed in our schools as was present at this Institute, and consider it one of the most interesting and useful educational gatherings that has been held in Vermont. The cordial interest of Rev. Mr. Pierce and Mr. Johnson, both of Bellows Falls, were of great service and were fully appreciated by all.

I have omitted to make special mention of the kindness and cordial hospitality with which either of the Institutes was received, for it was characteristic of all of them. The hearts as well as the doors of the citizens of the various localities seemed to be open, and all that could be done was done to make the session as agreeable as useful.

I have spoken so often of the many good results growing out of the Institutes, as they have been conducted in our State, that little seems now necessary to be said. In my opinion they continue to be the most effective agencies for stirring and keeping alive a general interest in the cause of education. By gathering the parents, the tax-payers and the teachers together to mingle in the discussion of the best practical methods of enlarging and improving the influences of our schools; by introducing to the common attention better methods of discipline, management and instruction; by commenting upon known and prevalent errors and mistakes; by directing attention to the true economy of good schools, they facilitate the introduction of improvements, which otherwise would be nearly impossible.

They are the best known instrumentalities for the accomplishment of certain necessary results, and constitute by far the most efficient means of widening and deepening the general interest in the prosperity and good management of our common schools. But while thus eminently useful and now indeed indispensable for insuring certain results, it is easily apparent that, although they may and do contribute largely to the elevation of the aims and strengthening the purposes of the teachers, and do much by preparing the public mind, to hasten the adoption of improved methods, they are too short a time in session, and indeed from their very necessary character, are not otherwise well adapted to secure that lasting improvement in methods of instruction and discipline which come, and alone can come, from a thorough training of teachers in the science of teaching which is now very generally acknowledged to be one of the greatest needs of our State.

For this thorough training of teachers, we must look to other agencies. Normal Schools of some description, must sooner or later be established here, as in other States, in order to give reasonable assurance of that thorough special training of teachers, without

which every educational reformation must come very far short of what certainly can be accomplished. But this matter of Normal Schools will be considered elsewhere in this Report and I venture to ask for its consideration a fair and thoughtful attention.

CONDITION OF THE SCHOOLS.

It will be recollected that the law requires in the Annual Report of this department a statement of the condition of the Common Schools in the State.

Before I proceed to give such views as arise from a consideration of the statistics, or from my own personal inspection of the schools, I will present the views of the local officials to whom the particular supervision of the schools is intrusted. There will be found subjoined extracts from the returns of Superintendents in all sections of the State. From necessity, much of the matter of these returns is omitted, but enough is presented to give a good idea of the general condition of the schools throughout the State, taken from the most reliable sources.

EXTRACTS FROM SUPERINTENDENTS' REPORTS.

It affords me no little pleasure to state that the condition of our schools for the past year in Addison is favorable—more interest manifested by parents, teachers and scholars than has been for a long time previous. Higher wages were paid, consequently better teachers employed.

Boarding around I have always regarded as injurious to the school and inconvenient to teachers. As a general thing, the enactment terminating this practice is favorably received in this town. In regard to Teachers' Institutes, they are of great benefit not only to teachers but to parents and scholars.

O. R. GAGE, Addison.

Our schools the past year have been taught by experienced teachers and have been conducted with much talent, and the teachers have generally manifested an earnestness and zeal in their calling which gives great promise of usefulness in the future. The majority of teachers the past winter have been male teachers, and have succeeded in governing the schools much better than the female teachers that were employed in our schools during the late war.

The standard to which schools ought to be brought up has not yet been reached and never will be until there is increased interest manifested by the parents and citizens generally. When the time arrives that the people elect the best men in the district for their committee, and he, at the earliest moment possible looks about and employs the most competent teachers for their school that is to be found, and committee, parents and superintendent visit their schools and look after the teacher and the interests of the school as they would after the farm or shop, then our schools must and will improve. Our schools are a *home institution* and must be looked after by the people at home.

GEO. SMITH, Middlebury.

The school registers may be highly useful if they are properly kept, but we find some of them quite imperfect, so much so, that our returns will not in every case be strictly correct. Would it not be well for the teacher, when any doubt

may arise about keeping the register, to refer the matter to the committee, and, if he does not know, let him call on the superintendent, and if he does not know, let him refer the matter to our friend Adams?

The Institutes are coming into more favor yearly, and our teachers are, some at least, coming to feel that they are highly beneficial to them. They are awakening a deeper spirit of laudable ambition to excel in the calling of teachers in our public schools.

I cannot speak with much certainty of the late act of the legislature in relation to boarding around. I think the boarding at one place will not receive general favor from our citizens unless they can see some good practical result from it. In some districts there is no suitable place for the teacher to board within a reasonable distance of the school house, and the past year teachers have gone a mile and more to their boarding places, and the present year they are trying the plan of boarding on the Grand List. I think if suitable boarding places can be had near the school house, and people are convinced that the schools are made better by the teachers boarding at one place, the measure will readily be acquiesced in. It is well known to those who have become acquainted with the workings of our school system that many of our teachers fail to secure good order in school. In some cases it arises from a want of aptness in the teacher to control the children, and in others from the presence of badly brought up and badly behaved boys who will generally maintain a defiant air towards female teachers and often make their boasts that they are not going to mind the teacher. In the latter case it is worse than useless for a female to undertake to secure obedience by corporeal punishment. It will no doubt prove a failure in every instance, and generally beget a feeling of hostility towards the teacher and often break up the school. In this respect impossibilities have been required of female teachers. I would suggest that the committees take such cases under their control and relieve these that are hired to *teach* from the most disagreeable part of what has commonly been considered to belong to school keeping. To effect this it is necessary that the committee visit the school often and inquire of the teacher whether there are any scholars that are not obedient to the rules of school, and give notice that if cases of bad behavior are persisted in it will result in the dismissal of such offending persons from school.

The law makes it necessary that there be a public examination of teachers. I learn that in some towns no public examination is had as the candidates strongly prefer a private one, so that in case of failure there be less sacrifice of feeling. It is not strange that young and inexperienced persons should feel much diffidence in the occasion, and the more so since there is no standard of qualification required by which they may know nearly the order of exercises to be pursued. It would no doubt be a great improvement to have the order of the examination made known to the candidates for teachers some weeks before the occasion arrives that a view of the subjects to be brought before the class might make them somewhat familiar with them and restore a degree of confidence that would make the occasion one to be desired rather than avoided.

A. LAWRENCE, Monkton.

I confess myself at a loss what to say in respect to the condition of the public schools in this town. There seems to be wanting in the community at large, that interest in the subject of education and in the progress of the schools, that is necessary to their best efficiency. This may be owing, in part at least to the circumstances of the people. These differ in some respects from those of most of the people of the State. The town is comparatively new, and the occupations of the people, for the most part, are of the more toilsome kind, and they are so much engrossed in the care and toil of providing for their families, the necessities and moderate comforts of life, that the importance of our schools and of improving the advantages which they proffer, fails to be duly appreciated. I cannot otherwise account for the numerous marks of absence indicated on the Registers.

The whole number of scholars who have attended school, some part of the time during the last school year, is 153. But the average attendance has been only 90; while at the same time the Registers show an amount of tardinesses, nearly equal to one third of the time, for each one of those in actual attendance. In my last year's Report to the Town Meeting, I endeavored to call attention to the pecuniary waste involved in making adequate provision, so far as outlay is concerned, for the instruction of all the children in town, and then, through their non attendance, or their tardy attendance, to allow so large a portion of the advantages paid for, to pass away unimproved.

During the past winter, three of our schools suspended from two to four weeks, and one was broken up so as not to be resumed, by the appearance among us, on our principal thoroughfare, of small pox. This seems to have been a serious drawback on the usefulness even of those schools where the usual school term was afterwards completed.

In consequence of this suspension of some of our schools, when resumed, they continued after the 20th of March, when, as the law now stands, it requires the Registers to be delivered into the hands of the Town Clerk. As the law explicitly declares the school year to begin on the 1st of April, and to close on the 31st of March following, whatever time the school is kept, between the 20th and 31st, must fail to be noticed on the Registers. This incongruity is probably owing to an oversight by the Legislature, when the law was altered so as to make the Registers returnable to the Town Clerk's office, on or before the 20th of March, instead of a later day. Whether the matter is of sufficient importance to call for any action on the part of the Legislature, is for the Secretary, or the Board of Education to judge.

C. H. KENT, Ripton.

Taken together, the schools of our town have been good the past year. But I have to say of teaching, like other pursuits, that there are those engaged in it who are totally unfit for the business, and are keeping school *without teaching or managing*. We want more good managers. A good manager with practical "common sense" should be the first consideration in the selection of a teacher. In order to have schools successful and profitable, we must learn to select persons who are fitted or adapted to the business, or, in other words, put the right person in the right place. Six weeks of good teaching is worth more to scholars than twenty four weeks of poor teaching.

We cannot over-estimate the importance of great thoroughness in district schools. It is here that the masses receive their education. To quote the language of an experienced teacher in this town: "I do believe in district teaching in a district school." I regret to say that there has been too much aping of the higher institutions in our district schools.

The Registers have a good influence in the schools, in inducing prompt attendance with some of the scholars, but I would have them amended so as not record the dismissal of small scholars before the close of school, for I think the day already too long for the confinement of the young in the school room. Three hours school a day is enough. Give them more physical education, and less of the abstract, and memorizing or stuffing kind. We forget that education should be more the work of developing that which is within, than a forcing or crowding in of that which is without.

The young mind is not capable of sustaining six hours of mental application daily. And why imprison it to a bench six hours a day for the purpose of having it where it can say A, four or five times or little more than that at best?

In regard to boarding around there is diversity of opinion. But those who are against it are mostly those who thereby have a little more tax to pay in consequence. I have heard no substantial reason advanced against a steady boarding place. And certainly the property holder is as much interested, or rather should be as much interested in the work of Education and the advancement of good

morals, as the man of less pretensions but more children. Property should minister to its own security as well as persons. Putting the board and fuel, the expenses, upon the Grand List is democratic, is just; and in no other way can property be made to bear its just proportion of burdens.

I am in favor of abolishing the whipping-the-cat practice of boarding around. If any think it costs too much to board the teacher in one place, they can bid the board off, and bid it off at the lowest possible low water mark and make it cheaper, which privilege they have. It is a good plan perhaps, for teachers to become acquainted with the people, but in a large district "getting acquainted" occupies a large part of the teachers time.

It is hard, exhaustive work to teach, and a portion of the time should be sacred to rest and recuperation, if necessary, which it cannot be in the continual change of boarding-around.

A. K. MARVIN, Salisbury.

The number of scholars who have attended school in this town the past year, has been much less than at any time since I have been officially connected with the schools. And judging by the registers, the attendance of those whose names are found in them has been quite irregular, in some districts the scholars not averaging more than half the time. In my estimation it would be far better for the scholar and for the school, to have the scholar attend steadily while it is a member of the school, and then leave it instead of being an occasional scholar during the whole term. I suspect that in too many instances their apathy and indifference on the part of parents in not taking more interest in their schools, arises not so much from inability to appreciate the importance of an education, as to the fact that their attention is so much taken up with matters of business or pleasure, which seems to them of so much greater consequence, that they have but little disposition to interest themselves in schools or any literary or intellectual matters. The fact is, we have become intellectually lazy. There are but few whose minds are as well versed in the various departments of knowledge as they might have been, and still have performed all the labor and transacted all the business they have, if they had not been so mentally indolent.

The elementary books now in use in our schools are so easy and simple that, unless accompanied by oral instruction on the part of the teacher, will have a tendency to make mere parrots of the scholar. Hence the necessity of having a teacher who can and will ascertain by questions of his own, whether the pupil has any idea of the lesson, or has only committed to memory the answers given in the book, without having any idea of its meaning.

And here another benefit would result from such a course of questions by the teacher, that is, the scholars would not only satisfy that they had formed some idea of the lesson, but would be learning to give, in their own words, utterance to their thoughts, and the teacher should see that they do it in a plain and brief manner. Let this method be persevered in through their school course, then, in after life, when called upon to express their views upon any subject as they take part in the various duties which devolve upon every citizen, in a government like ours they can do so in a clear, intelligible and brief manner. This is a matter that should not be overlooked; that is, one of the objects of our common schools should be to prepare the scholars as our future citizens, for usefulness in the various situations in which they may be placed.

In addition to the simplicity of the Elementary books in use in schools, the early age at which scholars now leave school, is another reason why our schools should be of the very highest order. It is very rare to find in any school in this town scholars over fourteen years of age. It is true that some of them pursue their studies at higher schools, yet the greater portion of them, doubtless, have finished their studies when they leave the Common School. Now, one or two things must follow, either the human mind is more susceptible of discipline and mental training, and can more readily grasp and retain that knowledge and im-

provement of which it is capable at an earlier age than formerly, or else it has not received that thorough culture which it is desirable it should have. But it takes the oak about as long to grow now as it did a hundred years ago. Experience has taught that the blacksmith's arm requires as much time to enlarge and strengthen now as years ago, and must strike as many blows. And it is doubtful whether the mind can acquire strength and culture with less thinking than formerly. And if the culture be had, it will take longer in consequence of the greater temptation to indolence and mental inactivity so prevalent at the present time.

Finally, let us endeavor to make our common schools of such a character that they will enable the pupils, not only to lay up for themselves rich treasures of interesting and useful knowledge, and in doing so, are prevented from spending their time in the streets, or in dangerous company—a consideration well worthy the attention of parents—but will enable them to make constant additions to their knowledge in after years, which in many instances will afford them equal and often purer enjoyment and satisfaction than will many a successful speculation to a mere business man.

T. BROOKINS, Shoreham.

I think there has been an improvement in our schools for the past year, particularly in keeping the school registers. I was particular at the examinations of teachers to remind them of their duty in regard to the registers, and I am pleased to find at the close of the past year so much improvement.

More of our teachers attended the Teachers' Institutes the past year than heretofore. The new law in reference to teachers board, I think will work well after the people become accustomed to it. There has been a great neglect with most of our teachers in elementary instruction. I am glad to have this noticed by the Secretary of the Board of Education, and hope that Superintendents will look after the elementary instruction in our common schools.

W. M. DAY, Starksboro.

As my report to the town has not been printed, I give below some extracts from it.

"As to the progress actually made in our school in the several branches of education taught for the past year, and as to their present condition and prospects, while I am not able to report entire satisfaction, in all respects, and in every school, yet, the teachers appear to have been industrious, laborious and faithful, and have done what they could under the circumstances. While reading and spelling, and the study of arithmetic and geography have been made prominent, as they always should be in our common schools, and while in those several branches commendable progress and improvement have evidently been made, the study of English Grammar has been too much neglected. In most of our schools, penmanship, also has been and still is too much neglected. In our common schools, penmanship should hold a more prominent place. Parents and district committees should interest themselves in the matter, and in employing and patronizing teachers—*other things being equal*—those should have the preference who can write a good hand themselves, and who will not, for lack of interest, or want of industry or skill, in the art, suffer this department any longer to be kept in the back ground.

In this as well as in many other departments of education, taught in our Common Schools, much depends upon the qualifications, industry, energy and perseverance of the teacher employed. A very important part of the duty of our district committees, therefore, is to procure the very best teachers—those who are well qualified to instruct in all the branches of common school education—teachers of experience, who love the employment; and who offer themselves as teachers actuated by a higher motive than merely to obtain the wages they are

to receive. Teachers of the right description should be sought after, and none others should be employed.

While we have been able thus far, in this town from year to year, to report some progress in all our common schools, yet the standard of education in them all is quite too low. The progress is not what it should be—neither what it might be, if all concerned were more deeply interested to improve and perfect our common school system.

Unsteady attendance and tardiness on the part of the scholars, are increasing evils in all the schools in town, as the registers show, and as far as possible should be at once remedied.

Visits to the schools by the district committees, and by the patrons generally, to ascertain from personal inspection, what improvement is made, should be much more frequent than they are. Our school registers show a great deficiency in this respect. Our teachers should be diligently looked after by parents and others interested in the school, as well as by the Superintendents.

It is the duty and privilege of all concerned, to ascertain, by personal inspection, whether the teachers do their duty or not, and whether the order, discipline, and improvement are what they *should* be. The tendency of frequent visiting to the schools, is to make the pupils more studious, and at the same time, to encourage the teachers, and make them more zealous and faithful in the discharge of all their duties.

SAMUEL W. COZZENS, Weybridge.

We have had no male teachers in town the past year, and have had excellent schools, I think better than any year since my connection with the schools in town, which will be a strong argument in favor of the system of boarding at one place, and of employing female teachers wholly in our schools. The school houses are in a very bad condition. The system of boarding at one place is looked upon more favorably than formerly, and we hope soon to establish it as a permanent institution.

W. H. CASEY, Whiting.

The great necessity in the way of improvement of our schools lies in stimulating the interest of our whole community in everything appertaining to the common school. Here is an apathy upon all that it seems nothing can remove. The exhibit of our registers shows that there is little interest in this great matter which so nearly concerns us all. We must wake up. Our Legislature is doing all it can, but it amounts to nothing unless we can give their acts force and sustain them with our whole heart. Our school laws are good ones, and we are all willing to admit as much. Then why in the name of reason not take hold and make them effective? Freemen of Vermont! do not rest this matter with the few officers who are directly appointed to look after this matter. It is your duty, aye, it should be counted your privilege, to give the helping hand in this great work. We honestly boast of our brave soldier boys, but alas, we cannot boast of the best schools. This should not be so. Let the cry go up from every Freeman in Vermont, when speaking of our schools: Excelsior! and then let him back his motto with deeds.

R. A. HARD, Arlington.

The condition of the schools of this town, for the past year, has been generally good, and the teachers well qualified. There have been some exceptions in cases where committees have hired their relations or personal friends without regard to the good of the school, or the aptness of the individual.

I think the present school law is generally well liked, and has produced good results in this town. Certainly, better teachers are employed, and better wages paid than three or four years ago. The people, too, seem interested and liberal in matters pertaining to the common schools, and, except in a few instances,

accept the law for raising board on the grand list, as an improvement on the old system of boarding around. Many districts have procured globes and other school apparatus during the past year; and at the annual town meeting I was voted additional pay without a dissenting voice.

I think much of the present efficiency of the schools in this town, and the interest manifested in them may be ascribed to the Teachers' Institutes, held in this vicinity. They have had an awakening power whose good effects it would be hard to calculate and whose leaven is still at work. The only amendment I would now suggest to the present school law, is one compelling towns of 4000 or more inhabitants to commence and sustain a Union, or graded school, whose instruction should be free to all the children of said towns. Such compulsion seems necessary since many towns are dilatory in claiming their privilege so to do. I think this matter should be legislatively considered.

L. A. KNIGHTS, Bennington.

There are many parents in town who seem indifferent and negligent in regard to the education of their children, and, strange as it may appear, there are some who actually refuse to send their children to school. Now, if the State makes abundant provision for the education of all the children within its borders, ought not the parents, on their part, to see that the children attend the schools? and, in case any refuse to do so, may not the State of right compel them by legal enactment, to a different course?

JOHN CURTIS, Dorset.

I send you an extract from my report to the Annual March Meeting. For many of the ideas expressed as according exactly with those derived from my official observation, I am indebted to the remarks of Superintendents, contained in the Annual Reports of the Board of Education, which, as a means of giving the true *status* of our schools, cannot be too highly estimated, or for the good of our educational interests, too widely circulated.

"During the year, in one or two districts, there has been manifested a commendable spirit in visiting the schools on the part of the parents, and here it was not by any means, general; but in the majority of our schools, the most of the visitors have been personal friends of the teachers. No heads of families, and but three of our prudential committee have attended at all. This is entirely wrong. The parent *daily* reviews his flocks and herds, and oversees the labor of his hired help, but it is asking too much to require him to visit, *occasionally*, the place where his children, the objects of his love and hope, are forming the characters upon which their future usefulness depends. How few of our children ever see their parents' faces in their workshop, the school-room, and how often the teacher, with little or no sympathy and encouragement, plods on day after day without once feeling that his or her work is being personally inspected by those most interested. Teachers who are what they ought to be, will make their schools good ones, even if they are not encouraged. How much more interesting and useful would they be, if parents, instead of being negligent and indifferent, would give them their sympathy and active and hearty co operation. The way to do this is to visit their schools. If there is a deficiency in the teacher to whose care they have entrusted their most precious treasures, it will be noticed and remedied, if possible. If there is a lack of books, as is too often the case, they will see the necessity for, and supply them, and will also see how advantageous the aid to be derived from outline maps, globes, &c., and will have them provided; and the greatest of all benefits resulting from their personal inspection of the schools which, not only encourages the pupils but stimulates the teacher to more earnest action, will be in providing against that worst of evils that effect our schools, the *irregularity of attendance on the part of the scholars*.—Our registers are sadly marred with marks indicating the absence or tardiness of the pupils. Many schools have an average attendance of but one-half, or two-

thirds, and the number of tardinesses amounts to a third or more of the whole number of days' attendance. No school can be efficient, in a great degree, where such is the order of things, for irregular scholars not only learn little or nothing themselves, but retard and prevent the progress of all others with whom they are in any wise connected. Every day's absence severs one or more links in the chain of studies, and but few such breaks are necessary to destroy the scholars' active interest in the school. No legislative action, as I can see, can remedy this evil. Parents alone can tell when their children ought and when they ought not, to attend. Sickness and other causes beyond their control may render their absence necessary. To them then belongs the duty of preventing this evil, and proper care and attention will work wonders. Let them be as careful to demand of their children punctuality and constant attendance (unless the excuse for absence be more than trivial) as they are to require teachers always to be present and punctual on their part, and the benefit will be twofold; they will not only render the schools more perfect, but also will be lessening, (unless all are alike prompt) in a measure, their school taxes which are often the subject of so much complaint, for, upon the average attendance is the distribution of the greater part of our public money made, and the more punctual the attendance the larger the average."

The Teachers' Institutes, held two days each year in each County in the State, I consider it the duty of each teacher to attend. "They are cheap, useful and powerful disseminators of knowledge: they are active and successful agents that are working out a great reform in our schools." No teacher ought to lose the opportunity of attending, and no district can afford to have them. But a small number of our teachers are present at these educational meetings. The law provides that they shall be paid for their time while in attendance; but many—and they are those, usually, who ought to avail themselves of the benefits to be gained most, are obliged to stay away because they have no means of going. I would respectfully urge, as a *paying and praiseworthy* proceeding, that each district, at the annual school meeting, instruct the prudential committee to provide, at the expense of the district, means for transportation for their teachers to these Institutes, if not otherwise provided for.

The enactment requiring the expenses of the school to be defrayed by tax upon the grand list, and not upon the scholar did not meet with universal approval here. Most of our districts adopted it, however, and but four or five of our teachers have been obliged to keep up the ancient practice of "boarding around." I hope another year will see this custom entirely abolished.

ED. L. WYMAN, Manchester.

I have a very high opinion of Teachers' Institutes, and think their importance to the schools can hardly be over-estimated. Professional and business men need instruction in their particular branch of business, and why should the teacher be an exception? I think the annual reports of the Secretary of the Board of Education are doing much in awakening the people of the State to an appreciation of the importance of a more thorough education, and the statistical information obtained through the School Registers, must necessarily form an important item in the basis of said reports. It is natural for parents to wish their children to make good progress in their studies, and to become dissatisfied if they appear to be progressing slowly, and teachers are too apt to yield to their wishes and hurry scholars over a great deal of ground without making any material improvement.

I find it to be the general impression throughout the State that the late Statute requiring the whole expense of the school to be borne by a tax upon the grand list, (which I highly approve) has abolished the old practice of "boarding around." I have not been able, wholly, to satisfy myself that it necessarily has that effect. In the town where I attended district school, (Jamaica) the schools were entirely supported by a tax upon the grand list; yet the practice was al-

most universal to "board around." The prudential committee would make out a tax against each tax payer for so much board and deliver it to the teacher and he would collect it. It is true, that for that purpose the teacher became practically the collector, but was he not equally so when the board was defrayed by tax upon the scholar?

I cannot speak very highly of the condition of our schools in this town. They were not so good as on my last visit to them three years before. Most likely our minds have been so absorbed by the great rebellion that it has effected our schools to some extent. I also find that the class of teachers employed has not improved of late, and have come to the conclusion that Superintendents should be more thorough in the examination of teachers, and endeavor to weed out the incompetent ones.

W. H. FOLLETT, Readsboro.

The schools of this town during the past year, in my view, have been good. The teachers have all been well qualified and devoted to their business, and most of them experienced. The scholars have been apparently interested in their studies, and have generally made fair progress in them. In the winter term particularly, I visited all of the schools near their commencement, and again near their close, and think they may be called truly successful schools. The Registers were generally correctly kept. In the two fractional districts their clerks seemed to differ, somewhat, as to what should be inserted in the part designed for fractional districts.

The County Institute was held here in June last. The impression left by it was manifestly favorable upon the community as well as upon the teachers. All that attended seemed agreeably entertained as well as profited. And in the course of my visits to the schools I perceived that many suggestions made at the Institute were adopted and successfully practiced by the teachers. The County Institute is certainly a popular and useful institution.

As far as I can learn, the public opinion of the town approves of the school laws that have been passed. Still, in some of the smaller districts, the teachers continue to "board around." The inhabitants of these districts seem to think they can board a teacher for less money in several places than in one, for what reason I cannot see.

In my view, the great obstacle to the improvement and perfection of the schools in this town, is the smallness of the districts. There are scholars enough for two and perhaps three well graded schools. How the difficulty can be satisfactorily removed, I am not prepared to tell.

JAMES A. SHELDON, Rupert.

The School Registers are becoming more reliable every year, as the system of keeping them comes to be understood by teachers and clerks. In fact, there is no other method by which the statistics of our schools and an every-day record be made known: only by keeping the Register and having them kept correctly, by teacher and clerk answering their questions correctly, can the statistical questions be answered correct; and by that means full and reliable returns can be made to the Board of Education.

The Teachers' Institutes which have been so successfully conducted for the past few years have exerted a good influence upon the schools, for they have showed the people that we have a system of school education worthy of their attention and encouragement. And the new methods of instruction they have introduced have been received with general favor. The annual reports seem to be more and more correct, and their desired object seems to be realized.

WM. J. HAMILTON, Sandgate.

The schools in our town have been very successful this year, but there seems to be a want of interest on the part of parents. They do not seem to get

time to visit schools much, and yet have abundance of time for everything else. I think, however, there is an increasing interest in this direction.

I think very much of Teachers' Institutes, and their effect upon our schools has been good. I wish that more teachers could attend them. The Registers have been generally well kept and filled out in due form. I think they are becoming more valuable and reliable every year.

R. E. GORDEN, Winhall.

We have a large number of teachers in town, and many of them of the first class. But the committees will persist in hiring some of their friends out of town because they can get a cheap teacher. Our schools are mostly small, though the districts seem to cover territory enough. Some of our schools, for the past year have been of a very high order, and the teachers of the right sort; but the greatest embarrassment the teacher has to labor under here, is the improper indulgence of parents in allowing their children to be absent and, very often, tardy. The Registers have been very well kept by teachers aside from using a pencil instead of pen and ink. Penmanship is very much neglected in our schools. There is a very strong tendency to go into higher branches before the scholars are able to comprehend them. I consider it of the greatest importance to commence right with a scholar and keep him in the elementary studies until mastered. Nearly half of our scholars take written arithmetic before they know the multiplication table, or how to subtract or divide.

A. R. KENDRICK, Burke.

Since I have been Superintendent, ninety-five teachers have been employed in this town—seventy-seven female and eighteen male teachers. Of the whole number only one has been dismissed, and that a male teacher, during the past winter. Indeed, it is believed that more dissatisfaction has been felt with the male teachers, than with all the others.

Our experience is that, with the funds which committees have in this town, female teachers may be employed much more profitably than those of the other sex.

J. EASTMAN, Danville.

I think if some way could be devised to induce the district and town clerks to be a little more punctual and complete in the discharge of their official duties appertaining to the Registers, it would greatly conduce to the beneficial operations of the school law.

The schools in this town and vicinity are greatly improved under the operations of the State School Law, as evinced by the great number of scholars in them, who, within a few years, have become qualified to teach in common schools.

S. B. HEATH, Groton.

In connection with the duties of a Superintendent, it may be considered a part of his labors, as he visits each school to make suggestions, advise and give directions relative to the best methods of teaching. Teachers can and will do better if told where they fail or where they might improve. The past year, in this town, reading has received attention while visiting schools, and an effort has been made to bring about an improvement in this important elementary study. Reading classes are conducted too much on the plan of a *music box* which is wound up and runs till it runs down, and then stops. Classes are called up and set reading and read till they read "down," and then stop, not just the way it should be. Teachers have been requested to give short lessons and have what was read, read correctly in every particular, to get the scholar out of the habit of reading every kind of composition on the same pitch, in the same voice and with the same movement. Teachers have been urged the importance of constantly giving ex,

amples in reading portions of a lesson over and over again, and much more so than is the general practice, until the proper accent, emphases and expression is firmly and unmistakably proved in the mind of the scholar. It was satisfactory to notice how much more classes improved with short and well read lessons than long uncorrect mechanical ones.

The poorest schools we have in this town are those taught by relatives of the prudential committees, his second cousin—half sister—third niece to the fourth grandmother's fifth daughter, &c., &c. This has become a nuisance everywhere, including this vicinity. Teachers should be hired from merit, not by favor. People do not realize the importance of having our best men to fill the office of prudential committee. This officer has more power for good or evil over our schools than all others connected with them besides. If "preaching" do not stop this habit of engaging relatives soon, the law ought to interfere.

Another thought has often come up the past year, in regard to the tenacity with which our teachers are confined to old ways and methods of teaching. A great many of their faults and imperfections lay back upon the schools they attended. Hence, how important that our Academies and High Schools where our teachers are fitted, should come up to that standard of perfection that characterizes Teachers' Institutes. It is evident that but few do, and here lies our great difficulty. It would be better if it were not the fact, but not one-half of our teachers can have an Institute and put into practice what they hear. This is meant, however, as no argument against their utility. Too much is crowded upon their minds at once, and they fall back to the way they were taught when attending school themselves. How can the "thousand and one" one-horse Academies and High Schools in Vermont be improved, that in their "throes" they may deliver unto us better teachers? Not unmindful that we get some that possess the true metal, we would wish that all would reach the high standard of the few.

A. J. HYDE, Hardwick.

I am unable to report that there has been much apparent improvement in our schools the past year, either in the manner of conducting them or in an increase of general interest in the community. Old habits are too strong for the feeble influences which would have a favorable tendency.

I think the importance of employing good teachers cannot be over-rated, although it is true that all districts cannot be so supplied, from the fact that there must always be some beginners, and out of the many these that are not well adapted to teaching.

If it be true that young children are slow to apprehend the importance of forming those good habits in study upon which their success as scholars so much depend; and that the laws of mind cannot be evaded or diverted by any passionate laxity, or any supported abridgment of the natural process of accumulation and retention, how great is the contrast between those teachers, who, in conducting the daily routine of recitation and explanation, give little or no attention to their pupils' habits or methods of study, and those who take such an interest in their welfare as leads them to carry the common sense theory of thoroughness into practice, and show them the need of committing their lessons to memory, not for the occasion of recitation only, but for a practical contribution to their stock of permanent knowledge.

There seems to be a strange and unaccountable tendency among some parents to sympathize too much with the misapplied ambition of their children, which manifests itself in hurrying through the pages of their books, innocently thinking that rapid advancement in that direction is an indication of smartness and deserves praise. But why should those parents who are supposed of course to know the absurdity of such a course, fail to eradicate such notions and substitute for them the only true standard of merit, thoroughness and practicability. In regard to Teachers' Institutes, I think there can be few who do not know that they are of great value in the cause of education. Even those who have never attended any

of them—as most in this town have not,—must see and appreciate the tendency which they have in improving the condition of schools.

I think the enactment relating to “boarding around” is not quite strict enough to suspend the practice entirely. It seems not to have the least effect in this town.

R. RISLEY, Jr., Kirby.

The school interest in our town is quite encouraging. In many instances there is a decided improvement. Larger sums of money have been raised during the year for school purposes than usual. Most of the teachers during the year have manifested an earnestness and zeal in their work worthy their calling. I have called especial attention of teachers to keeping a correct record, and find, on the return of the registers, improvement.

The recent act of the Legislature in abolishing the old practice of “boarding around” is, in my opinion, a timely arrangement, and receives much favor.

M. C. HENDERSON, Lyndon.

The schools in this town are very few in number, and consequently I have but little to say in regard to them. The school houses will compare favorably with those of other towns: with very few exceptions our schools during the past year have been under the care of skillful and successful teachers. Very good progress has been made by the scholars in the different branches taught.

In regard to Teachers' Institutes, no one can have any doubt in regard to the advantages derived from them.

The system of school registration I regard as of very high importance. We care not what is the present condition of our schools, nor whether improving or retrograding, either as a whole or in any particular localities without the data which are furnished by the school registers.

M. W. SMITH, Newark.

In our town there seems to be a determination, in some of the districts not to give up the unpleasant, uncomfortable practice of boarding around. Some will contend that the intention of the new school law was not to do away with it, but that the school might be supported from the Grand List entirely, instead of making up the board bill on the scholar.

Most of our school houses are in a poor condition, and many are unfit for use. Many of the district clerks are very remiss in their duties failing to report at the proper time and in the proper manner. In my opinion our schools cannot and will not be what they ought and might be, till all are more willing to be taxed, and more willing to give their time and attention to the subject of educating the young,—till the qualification of teachers shall be raised to a higher standard.

Reading is one thing that is sadly neglected in all our schools, for the very good reason that there are no good readers, comparatively, among our teachers.

I would here suggest that some good elocutionists, prepared for the task, furnish themselves with a set of books to make the expense as small as possible for the students,—cavass the state, as do some of our good penmen, teaching a class here and there. I believe there might be much good done in this way if the right kind of men would take it in hand.

J. VARNUM, Jr., Peacham.

The broader the horizon of my experience becomes, the more I am convinced of that fact that in few things do teachers fail more in than in *thoroughness*. It is a trite saying that “one bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.” So it is true that one idea in the mind is worth two plying about it. And the only way the desired result can be secured that the fruit of teaching may be lasting, is by *frequent, constant review*.

Another thing which seriously hinders the success of our schools is, the *constant*

change of teachers. In my official report to the town I recommended to committees to secure, if possible, a good female teacher, and to keep her in the school room as long as possible, summer and winter. During the past winter some of our best schools were taught by females.

GEO. M. WILEY, Ryegate.

With one exception, our schools during the past year have proved eminently successful. The greatest difficulty that we have to contend with is the want of interest of parents. Scarcely one in twenty ever visits the school room, or shows any active interest in regard to the school. This neglect of parents is discouraging to a teacher because it shows a want of sympathy, and injurious to the scholar also because a child's estimate of the importance of a school is always in exact proportion to the interest manifested by his parents in regard to it. Parents should feel it their privilege as well as duty to visit their schools often, look after the welfare of their little ones there as well as elsewhere, and to cheer their teacher onward in their high and noble calling by showing them that they too have an interest in all that pertains to the intellectual training of their children.

The distribution of the public money, I am satisfied, should be on the aggregate, instead of the average attendance. As an illustration of the injustice of the present system, notice two districts of our town, district No. 1, with a Grand List of \$600, supported 20 weeks school the past year at an expense of \$91, received as their share of the public money \$37.17, and paid a school tax of about 9 cents on a dollar, while district No. 2, with a list of only \$150, supported 24 weeks school at an expense of \$115.80, drew \$27.19 of the public money, and paid a tax of nearly 60 cents on a dollar of their Grand List. It certainly seems that a law that in reality pays a premium for short schools should be done away with as soon as possible, and something better substituted.

As regards Teachers' Institutes—their importance cannot be over-estimated. They exert a powerful influence for good, and, in my opinion, the State would be the gainer if a larger appropriation should be made for their benefit, instead of any attempt to withdraw the scanty pittance by which they are at present supported. The school registers I deem a necessary appendage to every school room. They are to the school what the journal and ledger are to the counting room, and the annual report, who can say too much in their praise. I wish they could be read by every family in the State. Such startling facts as they present to us each year would be productive of much good.

The old custom of raising board and fuel upon the scholar never found much favor in this town, hence, the new law in reference to that gives universal satisfaction. The most of our districts furnish a steady boarding place for the teacher.

The Superintendent's report for this town, has this year for the first time, been ordered to be printed, a copy of which I will soon send to you.

A. S. LAMB, Sheffield.

Our schools in St. Johnsbury have been generally doing very well during the past year. Two have been partial failures during the winter term, one through want of experience on the part of the teacher, and another through want of co-operation on the part of the district. If parents, especially in those districts in which the larger boys have been accustomed to be a law to themselves in respect to their attendance and deportment in schools, would earnestly co-operate with their teachers to secure well disciplined and profitable schools, we should have fewer failures on the part of the latter than heretofore.

My limited observation as Superintendent satisfies me that we need to insist upon more thorough qualifications on the part of many of our teachers to discipline their schools in the elementary branches. They have had no training in Mental Arithmetic, and having never learned to trace and express in precise and grammatical forms the process of reasoning from premises to conclusion in the simplest

mathematical problems, they fail to teach others how to do the same things. In so doing they make a great failure as teacher, greater than they will ever comprehend until they see how mighty an instrument for intellectual culture this little "Mental Arithmetic" may become in the hands of a skilful teacher. Let "Warren Colburn's First Lessons" be accurately and thoroughly taught in all our common schools and we may let other mathematics take care of themselves. Similar deficiencies in other elementary branches oftentimes make the best efforts of teachers to instruct their schools comparatively fruitless, and the time has evidently come in Vermont, when Superintendents should insist upon better qualifications to teach reading, spelling, writing and mental arithmetic in our schools, than a majority of those heretofore licensed to teach have been able to exhibit. And it will doubtless do no harm if the teachers of all our High Schools and Academies, who have the training of most candidates for service in these common schools, will put them to studying these primary things. The longer I teach the more I am inclined to adopt this course with those that come under my care; and if in any respect I may sometimes hope that my labors have been useful as a teacher, it is in this chiefly, that I may have added something to the qualifications of my scholars to teach well in our primary schools.

J. K. COLBY, St. Johnsbury.

Our schools for the past year have generally been prosperous, most of them under the care of successful instructors, several of whom might well rank as first-class teachers. We have in town many very fine young scholars, some, I fear, are ambitious to "go too fast." Many of our young ladies that are excellent Arithmeticians, fail in Orthography and English Grammar; and so far as my observation extends, this is a prevailing fault, not only in this, but other towns.

In reference to school registers, teachers have generally done their whole duty, but the District Clerks have been both sadly deficient and negligent in their returns. I think the non division of the public money in such districts would work a speedy and thorough reformation. It is certainly an evil which calls for some remedy.

The practice of boarding around is not wholly abandoned. It is an evil that should no longer exist.

J. M. PILLSBURY, Sutton.

I am happy to say there is a growing interest on the part of teachers and district clerks in filling out the registers. The teachers have done their duty in the matter, and the clerks have done much better than last year, still a few of them are very imperfect.

Pudential Committees have paid but little attention to the schools, in some instances not having visited the school during the term. If they would attend the public examination of teachers it would be another step in the right direction. I would say to their credit they have employed experienced and competent teachers generally.

The present school law is being appreciated, still, in my opinion, there is chance for improvement. If a greater proportion of the public money was divided equally among the districts so as to favor the small ones, and the remainder on the aggregate attendance, to encourage long schools, it would be better.

HARMON HALL, Bolton.

I cannot express in too strong language my feeling of the importance of greater thoroughness in elementary instruction. The impression prevails too generally among us, that almost any person is qualified to teach in the lower departments of our graded schools, and as a consequence many times those who are not thoroughly educated are selected to teach where children's habits of study are forming, and they need the most careful training. No one is qualified to be the teacher of a child in the rudiments of education and direct him in his first steps

in the pathway of knowledge unless he has gone over the whole ground thoroughly, and is prepared to teach in the higher departments. The very best talent and the most thorough education is requisite to fit one to be the teacher of those first beginning to study.

My conviction is also, that there is too little attention paid in these days to the cultivation of the memory. Children are not drilled enough in committing accurately what is contained in the text book, and is designed to be stored in the memory. This neglect results in a great loss through all one's after life. A person who fails to be properly trained in this respect will never have the power to hold and recall what would be of great value to him. He has not the command of facts and ideas which have come under his notice. He becomes dependent upon others, or upon books which he must consult as often as he has occasion to make use of any particular thing, which once has come to his knowledge.

I find too little care exercised in making out the registers. It is impossible for me to make this report accurate for the want of accuracy in others.

E. MIX, Burlington.

In making my annual report I am gratified to be able to say that the cause of education is making some progress in this town. It is believed that the present condition of our schools is far better than formerly, and changes for good are still going on, and that they are becoming profitable nurseries for the young and rising generation; capable of affording that healthful, moral and intellectual food, for want of which so many of our youth, in by-gone days, have perished.

Much, however, remains to be done, and many prominent evils demand correction before our schools will assume that prominent position to which they are designed. There is an unwarrantable apathy on this subject in the community—a want of just appreciation of the benefits of common schools that it is exceedingly difficult to account for. Still I think these evils are becoming gradually less. In some of our districts much more interest in the schools has been manifested during the past year, than in any previous year since I have had the Superintendency, and we feel encouraged.

We have built one new school house since my last report—a plain but convenient and comfortable structure, very pleasantly located.

It has been my aim, to raise, as far as possible, the standard of qualification of teachers. I do not think that mere book learning, however profound, is sufficient to entitle to a license to teach. There should be also the *tact to teach—to interest, to impart* knowledge in a clear, concise and familiar manner. Many teachers, otherwise well qualified, fail entirely in these most important particulars. It gives me great pleasure to say that many of our teachers are aiming at a higher standard of qualification for their position and duties—that old and obsolete methods of teaching are fast giving way to new and more common sense modes—that children are taught to think, and to think consecutively and intensely instead of merely learning “by rote,” and from the book.

In many of our schools, the government has been good—generally of a parental character. Our teachers are finding that firmness mingled with mildness and affection, will, almost invariably secure order and decorum and diligence in the school room—thus superseding the necessity for the rod. That our common schools may become increasingly the ornaments and bulwarks of society, and the means, with other kindred auxiliaries, of perpetuating our civil, moral and religious institutions, is the earnest wish of

C. M. SEATON, Charlotte.

Fees for private examination of teachers should be one dollar, or more, to be accounted for to the State Treasurer. The Superintendent might be allowed a part in his bill. As it is now, Superintendents feel that it is mean to take fifty cents from a teacher for his personal use. But as the object is to secure a general attendance at

public examination, if the fee went to the State, the Superintendents would be relieved of personal feelings.

S. M. WHITING, Colchester.

A commendable effort has been made by committees to procure the services of experienced teachers, especially for the winter term. The average number of seasons (prior to this winter) taught by teachers, is five. This is a favorable omen of good to our schools. Better wages have been paid than for years before.

It seems to me that the question as to the benefits resulting from "Teachers' Institutes" is settled in the minds of the community. I look upon these Institutes no longer as an experiment, but as a necessary means for the advancement of the cause of education which we cannot lay aside.

No teacher can attend an Institute, give careful attention to suggestions and explanations made without being better qualified for his task.

Boarding around will soon be a matter of history and will be regarded by future generations as a ridiculous institution of former years. One instance has come under my observation where the district has sold the board to the lowest bidder. Why not sell the wages of the teacher to the lowest bidder? While it is evident that good is resulting to the schools by giving the teacher a home in some of our good families while in our service, I think there are other marked benefits arising from having the whole expense of the school on the grand list. Another year will demonstrate more fully.

P. C. ABBEY, Essex.

If a district has graded schools, and these schools are not coterminous, or of equal length, may they not make the average attendance for each separate, and then add these averages for the average of the district?

The defraying of all the expenses of the school, including fuel, board of the teacher, &c., has so swelled the school taxes, that the inequality of the taxes in different districts becomes more apparent, and the people begin to inquire if these burdens cannot be made equal. The most wealthy agricultural districts are likely to have the smaller number of scholars, and can get along with a less expensive school. In some districts a tax of ten per cent will suffice, while in others, the tax must be as high as 40 per cent. The people are discussing the plan of making the whole town into one district, and have the schools on the graded system, with a high school at the centre. If we attempt this, can you suggest a plan to equalize the property now owned by the several districts? Is there a better plan than this: appoint commissioners to appraise the property of each district, then out of the annual tax, deduct for each district ten per cent of the value of its property, distributing it *pro rata* among all the tax-payers of the district. Let this be done for ten years, and then each district, and each taxpayer will have received a consideration equal to the value of their interest in the school district property.

C. E. FERRIN, Hinesburgh.

From my rather limited observation during the past year I am led to believe that the condition of the schools in this town are improving, or at least, most of them. More interest is manifested on the part of the parents of the scholars. I think if it can be still more aroused it will add materially to the good of the schools. They find some fault and make some objection to the school register—think it unnecessary and useless. But I think these impressions are becoming less prevalent. These objections manifest an interest which leads to investigation, and to my mind, is preferable to indifference. The schools cannot be materially benefitted until the inhabitants of a district can be made to believe that the best teachers are the cheapest, which cannot be had without a reasonable compensation for their services. The practice has become too prevalent of having cheap teachers, and also female teachers in the winter be-

cause they can be had cheaper than males. Most of them are good teachers of our summer schools but incapable of governing our winter schools. The practice of boarding the teacher "around," I think is becoming obsolete. The general impression is that they should board in one place, although the "boarding around" system has some advocates, on the ground that they had rather board the teacher than pay the money.

In regard to elementary instruction, I am of the belief that the greater thoroughness the great good until the principles are thoroughly understood.

I know that half of the scholars of our schools are masters of the *questions and answers* of our text books; but of the principles which they have reference to they are as ignorant nearly as though they had not seen a book.

There is not a dictionary, or book of reference, globe, map, clock, or thermometer in a school house in the town, and I am fearful there never will be.

A. H. CHESSMORE, Huntington.

It was well to put all expenses upon the grand list, for this recognizes the obligation of men having property to pay for the support of schools whether they have children or not.

Only two teachers have "boarded around" the past year—those because they were foolish enough to agree to do so. They had never taught before.

Tardiness is a great evil in the schools of this town, and there are far too frequent *absences*. The work of the District Clerks in the registers is often done in a slovenly and inaccurate manner. A forcible argument for the need of better education is found in the way they make returns. Many of them *cannot* do it well; they are not qualified in writing, spelling or figures.

AUSTIN HAZEN, Jericho.

The "Teachers' Institute" held in this town last December left a good influence behind it. More interest is felt among tax-payers in the public schools. They are beginning to see that globes, outline maps, dictionaries, &c., are necessary for the proper instruction of our schools. Efforts are making to obtain them in some districts, and I hope, ere the close of the year that our larger and more forward schools will be supplied, if no other can be induced to procure them. Our public schools sadly need all these modern improvements. We are behind the times in this respect. And in regard to schools as to everything else, if we wish to succeed we must keep pace with the steady onward march of progress and improvement.

I think there is too frequent change of teachers in all our schools. It appears to me better to obtain the services of a competent teacher, either male or female, and continue them from term to term for two or three or more years than to change twice or more each year. For many reasons I think our schools would be much improved by so doing.

A. M. PLANT, Milton.

I can speak favorably of the school register, but they are not accurately kept, not as accurately as they should be.

Teachers' Institutes greatly contribute to the cause of education, because through them teachers become acquainted with the best modes of government and instruction.

The school house with one or two exceptions are not as good as they ought to be. They are cold, coarsely finished and poorly furnished. The desks are rude, coarse things, whittled, haggled and hacked by the generations of scholars that have come and gone, but the rude benches, mutilated as they are by the knife, (deserving no better fate) linger still monuments of a ruder day, but unworthy ones of this more progressive age. Nearly every school house finds ample ventilation through the cracks in the lath where the plastering has fallen off.

In most of the school houses the stove pipe is old and stands twisted and awry and if it is not a wonder that the houses are not burned up by them, (for their gaping joints exposes the fire as it ascends) it is a wonder that it does not make the scholars all crazed. Why not wake up from this Rip Vanwinkle nap, and be in earnest about our scholars, visit them as often as a farmer would his cattle which are taken care of by a servant—see whether the scholars are being crammed, or taught as they should be, see whether they are getting the discipline that will enable them to work out the grand problem of life. Build new school houses—supply them with modern furniture and conveniences for the schools of the nineteenth century in a land “where hearts and hands and tongues are free.” Make them pleasant as your own sitting rooms and then the scholar, instead of going to a prison and an irksome task will go to pleasant studies, and the imaginative mind of childhood will transform it into a fairy place.

The best teachers should always be hired cost what it may. The extra teacher may wake up to activity your sleepy child, and unroll to him “knowledge’s ample page,” when your ordinary teacher would have left him to sleep on forever.

You like to be instructed by the best minister; if you are sick you get the best doctor; if you have a lawsuit you employ the best lawyer. It is as much for your interest to employ the best teacher to take care of your child, of its young, plastic, expanding mind.

S. H. DAVIS, Richmond.

Extracts of the report of the Superintendent of common schools in South Burlington for the year ending March, 1866.

The common schools in this town, as a whole, have not made that progress during the past year, as would be desirable and might reasonably be expected, from the amount of money expended upon them, and the question will naturally arise, why? In attempting to answer this question, I trust you will allow me to speak plainly, and if any one thinks I have not judged rightly, and have been mistaken in reference to the causes of failure in some of the districts, I can assure them that I have had no wish to gratify any personal interest, but have made this report wholly with a desire to promote the best interests of our schools. In the first place, your Superintendent has felt that it is *very probable* that one reason why our schools have not been made prosperous, has been, because he has not been as well qualified to perform the duties belonging to that office as he thinks one should be holding that position. It has been nearly twenty years since he was engaged in teaching, and his employments since that time have been such as to give him little time to keep his mind familiar with the several branches of study pursued in our common schools, much less to make himself thoroughly acquainted with the new principles of science that are constantly coming up, and the changes that arise in our geographies, and in the new methods of teaching nearly every branch of study. It was also his first year’s experience as Superintendent, and he has not had during the past year that time to devote to preparation for the examination of teachers, and for his visits to the schools as would have been desirable to make them of interest and profit. I can but feel and regret there was of necessity a deficiency here. Second, the teachers employed the past year have not all been as experienced and well qualified in every respect as they should have been to make their schools interesting and profitable. Quite a number of them have been very young, and teaching has been an experiment with them which has not proved in every case a successful one, so that the Superintendent would not feel justified in giving them a certificate to teach the same schools, again, certainly not until they had more experience, and had become more efficient teachers. Third, I think that, perhaps, the greatest reason has been the prudential committees have not all been as particular in their selections of teachers as its importance demanded, and fear some have been governed more by personal interest, either of themselves, or some of their friends, than by an earnest desire to promote the best interest of the schools. It is

too often the case, not only in this town, but in other towns so far as my observation has extended for several years past, that those who are appointed to obtain teachers for their schools, hire cheap and inexperienced teachers—mere girls and boys—who ought to be pupils rather than teachers. However well qualified they may be so far as their knowledge of books is concerned, they have not the age and experience and knowledge of human nature, to govern even themselves, much less those placed under their care. I would rather have a good experienced teacher for two or three months, than to have an ordinary or poor teacher for a whole year. Many a committee man will change a good and tried teacher, for a young and poor teacher. Not that I would say or intimate that all young teachers are poor ones, for sometimes a comparatively young teacher, will do better in some of our schools, than many of those who have taught several terms, but this is not usually the case. I feel that I cannot say too much on this point, and perhaps I cannot do better than to repeat what has been said by an able and efficient Superintendent in past years: "I think I am not wrong in tracing this evil (of changing teachers) in some instances to the practice of rotation in office, according to which is elected every year in the district a different committee who have their personal desires to gratify, their particular friends to please, and for whose benefit and special accommodation, the old teacher however good and excellent must go out with the retiring committee in order that the new teacher to be employed by the new committee may come in *according to agreement*. We cannot have first-rate schools under such diversity of management. Order which is nature's first law, system, method, plan, working with an aim and to a great result, is consistent or possible only with permanent teachers." So says one who had the Superintendency of schools for several years, and is it not too true at the present time? I would then urge the several prudential committees who may be appointed at the next school meetings in the several districts, to seek for the best teachers that can be had, for liberal wages, to take the charge of their schools. Some think that because a school is small, that a young and ordinary teacher will do, but it is a great mistake. Every district school needs a good and thorough teacher. It seems to me that the prosperity of our schools depends mainly upon the hiring of good teachers; and the responsibility rests to a great degree upon the prudential committees, and yet I do not know but the greater share of the responsibility should go farther back and rest upon the parents. And may I not truthfully say, that you may have ever so good a Superintendent, or teachers, or prudential committees, and if the parents do not sustain them, but rather encourage their children to disobedience and unfaithfulness as pupils, the school will fail of accomplishing all that is desirable or should be expected.

A. KIMBALL, South Burlington.

This is the first year that I have served the town of Underhill in the capacity of Town Superintendent of common schools, and I am, therefore, unable to make any statement in regard to the progress of our schools. My labors as Superintendent have been exceedingly pleasant, though attended with many difficulties. I believe there is more in this town to embarrass the Superintendent in his work, than in almost any other town in the County, and perhaps in the State. In the first place, more than one third of the districts in our town are composed entirely of a class of people who have scarcely any appreciation of a good school. Though they are interested in their schools, and evidently intend to make them what they should be, they are yet ignorant of the wants of their children and of the nature of a good school. In some of these schools no first, or even second rate teacher, in the matter of scholarly attainments, can be induced to labor for any consideration whatever. I have therefore been annoyed with applications for certificates to teach by those whose qualifications in point of scholarship, I have had every reason to doubt. And yet as it has seemed to me I have been compelled to license some of this class to teach in particular districts, in order that these districts might be supplied with schools at all. In all cases of this kind, however, I am happy to say that the teachers have

not only been very satisfactory to the districts, but have proved themselves really energetic and thorough in managing and instructing their pupils so far as they have needed instruction.

Another hindrance to the best success of our schools is the limited sum of money to which almost all our districts are in the habit of restricting their committees. In many cases the sum is too small, as our schools are now managed, to secure the services of good teachers. In other cases, while the sum is amply large, the full benefit of it cannot be realized, so badly is the matter of *engaging* teachers managed by the committees themselves. I have labored to the utmost to impress upon the districts the importance of securing good teachers for several successive terms, but with no very beneficial results as yet.

I find that the influence of school registers in very many cases is excellent. They do much towards remedying the irregularity of the pupils in attendance upon school duties, and also towards giving the people correct information of the true condition of their schools. With us I think they will be a very important means of working a desirable change in our schools.

In regard to the law which has terminated the "boarding around" system—I find that it meets the universal approbation of the people. The people with one accord would say that our scholars are better for it. I regret very much that our teachers have not availed themselves of the benefit of the Teachers' Institute to a greater extent. I regard it as almost indispensable to the best success of the teachers themselves, and they are, moreover, very useful in awakening the people as a whole to the needs of their schools. I have labored continually to bring about a greater degree of thoroughness in elementary instruction in all our schools, and, as I would hope, with some success. Our most successful schools have been those in which the elementary branches have received the greatest attention. And I trust the time is not far distant when all higher branches shall be entirely removed from our schools.

S. L. BATES, Underhill.

My connection with the schools of this town, in my present capacity, commences with the middle of last October. I am, therefore, unacquainted with the character and tendency of the schools of last summer, so far as observation and careful inspection might give me grounds for judging. But from report and the general appearance of the registers, I should pronounce them very good. With one or two exceptions the winter schools have been excellent—worthy the pride of every patron and supporter. With three exceptions our teachers have had the benefit of the law in relation to "board," and have received good compensation for their excellent and faithful service. Female teachers have been paid well in most cases. There is quite a general good feeling in regard to having the teacher enjoy all the benefits of a steady place to board, and in one case where the teacher engaged to board around for higher wages, some dissatisfaction was manifested because the law was not respected. We regard this provision as an excellent one, and it will do much to elevate the character of our schools by enabling experienced teachers to be engaged. I should have hailed with delight such a privilege while teaching in years gone by. May this law meet with general favor as people witness its benefits.

The returns show quite an unfavorable report in relation to promptness, which is not a fault of the teachers. This and many other evils might be quite effectually removed if parents would take a strong and thorough interest in every thing calculated to elevate the general tone and success of the schools. Here is, in my opinion, one of the main difficulties which demands earnest attention and action to remove. Every thorough teacher regrets that there is not a change, more universal in its extent; and in quite too many instances they find it a serious obstacle to success. A reference to the registers discloses the fact that committees and parents seldom, if ever, visit the schools—especially for a good purpose. Our teachers and pupils want the earnest sympathy and encouragement of every parent and supporter of the school.

There would be a decided reformation in relation to tardiness and regularity of

attendance, as well as interest in study and improvement, if parents would take special pains to have their children prompt and regular, and would visit the schools often, encouraging both teacher and pupil in every noble and worthy effort in the right direction. Here is where a reformation is greatly needed, and I regard the means being employed as the very best.

The Institutes and educational meetings are exerting a powerful influence to effect good and wholesome reforms. Experience has given me opportunity to test the value of the excellent theories and practical suggestions made at these meetings. Our teachers hail with joy these meetings. The people of the town generally feel interested in their success and patronize them whenever convenient. May they be continued under the present system and judicious management. Thus we take pleasure in seeing our schools elevated in every particular, until they shall assume a higher and much more elevated position than they now occupy. With the present good law and management, we hope every improvement will be effectual, and meet the earnest sanction and support of the people.

HENRY W. HOBART, Westford.

The Teachers' Institutes, in my opinion, are doing a great work for the schools of Vermont. I do not think it possible for a teacher who has any interest in his business to attend one of these educational meetings without imbibing new views and experiencing stronger resolutions than ever, to carry on the glorious work of aiding the young in the acquisition of knowledge. As generally conducted they have not only a tendency to stimulate and arouse the teacher to more effort, but also the principal citizens on whose encouragement and aid much of his success depends, are awakened to the responsibility resting on them. Perhaps some new method of instruction or government will be introduced which lighten the burden of the teacher, and give him a new impulse to perform faithfully the duties devolving upon him. Many a teacher who has left his school to attend an Institute, feeling weary and discouraged, has returned vigorous in purpose to arouse the dormant faculties of his school and lead it on to nobler and better exertions. Much has been accomplished and much more will be. People who have hitherto withheld their hospitalities, are now eagerly soliciting this body to convene in their vicinity.

The Registers seem neatly adapted to the wants of district schools. The directions to teachers and district clerks are so plainly and pertinently given that the most ordinary mind can comprehend the meaning and reply to the interrogatories accordingly. The present school law, in my opinion, is nearly unexceptionable. It only needs to be enforced when any neglect on the part of any school officer in the performance of his duty, occurs.

Could school teachers, committees and superintendents always act according to their best convictions of duty, no doubt great progress might soon be made in the advancement of school education. Teachers should be above conceit in regard to their attainments. Committees should procure teachers of merit rather than relations, and superintendents must demand thorough qualifications from each applicant to whom he awards a certificate. Not until a conscientious performance of these duties is attained, can we ever expect to succeed in advancing the interests of schools.

J. M. FAY, Williston.

A slow but gradual progress is perceptible in the condition of the schools here; and inasmuch as parents are manifesting an increasing interest in their welfare, I am led to hope that their advancement will be correspondingly accelerated, for, as I have often urged, all the conditions requisite for a successful school, begin with parents. Let them first "take the beam out of their own eye"—see to it that *their* duties are faithfully done, and good, efficient schools will generally follow as a matter of course. It is their duty—and a very reasonable duty, to insist upon efficient schools; and, by so insisting, they will inevitably cause the necessary steps to be taken to produce them. Whilst I give this credit to parents, I regret to say that I

cannot say as much for the district clerks, only two of whom complied with the law by making their statistical returns, and only the same two properly filled out their registers. As a consequence, I have had to go through the other districts to gather statistics to enable me to make my report.

The "questions to teachers" were so imperfectly answered, in some instances, that I have had to delay my report, in order to procure a thorough revision, and this has led me to the determination to pay more attention to the examination of applicants for teaching, and to insist upon higher qualifications, even if it should interfere with the too prevalent wish of committees to procure cheap teachers. One qualification, at least, they shall possess, and that is, the capacity to keep their registers according to law.

The Teachers' Institutes I desire again to commend in the highest terms, as being a most potent aid to the common school—as tending almost more than any thing else, to diffuse and intensify, among all classes, that lively interest in the usefulness of the school, which does so much to insure its success. And I trust it will not be long before the Secretary will hold another in this town.

Boarding around is becoming obsolete in this town, and I think the people are about prepared to say, with Dow, Jr., "so mote it be."

"Greater thoroughness in elementary instruction"—greater thoroughness in instruction in all branches taught, is much to be desired. Asking the questions and receiving the answers, as given in the text-books, *verbatim*, is but a low order of teaching—is, indeed, mere *rote*-teaching, calling into exercise the *memory*, merely, and generally failing to impart *ideas*, to set the reasoning faculties at work; and hence *words*, instead of *facts* and *principles*, are taught and forgotten very soon after the book is put aside. This method of instruction should be no longer tolerated in any school. The *text-book* should be the teacher's *mind*, which should be abundantly supplied with whatever knowledge it is necessary to impart to the pupil, and apt in elucidation and illustration. And to fit the teacher for his high vocation, he needs a special training as much as the lawyer, the physician or clergyman. Hence there should be schools for this express purpose—normal schools, and teaching should be regarded as a profession to be followed as the business of life. When this is fully brought about, we shall have, as the general rule, and not as the exception, good teachers, good schools and good scholars.

I am glad to notice that the Annual Report is attracting more and more attention in this vicinity, both among parents, teachers and pupils.

GEO. W. HARTSHORN, Canaan.

You ask my opinion in reference to school registers, &c. In reply I would say that I consider some system of registration and report, whereby the State at large may gain a knowledge of the condition and efficiency of our schools, indispensably necessary to their progress. I think the present system of registration very good; but if I were to change it in any respect, it would be to require greater accuracy in answering the statistical interrogatories—that is to substitute *facts* for approximate answers so far as the facts can be ascertained. There is surely no danger of too thoroughly acquainting the public with the wants, imperfections and excellencies of our common schools. "Teachers' Institutes" should be multiplied among us. No school gathering, where even a few of the friends of education were met, who were willing to unite their counsels and their efforts in behalf of their schools was ever wholly in vain. How much more, then, is accomplished where the gathering is numbered by hundreds, and controlled by a master spirit possessing ability, experience and earnestness. Subjects of the greatest importance in their bearings upon our schools are there brought up and discussed in a manner that appeals to every one's common sense, awakening thought which in its turn produces action. Of the effects of the Institutes upon the schools of Concord, I think I have some knowledge. I had for several years been actively engaged in teaching in different parts of the town, when the first Institute was held in this part of the County. I have also been

engaged in teaching at intervals in town ever since, and for the year past have been officially connected with the schools as superintendent, and can safely say that there is twice the interest felt in the cause of education now that there was then, while the efficiency of our schools generally has well nigh doubled. The change is not wholly due to the Institutes, of course; but in connection with the school law generally they have exerted a very salutary influence.

Our community here is composed of several classes. We have the consistent, earnest devoted supporters of the school law, (and this class embraces nearly all the teachers and those who have been teachers since the law was in force, together with the young men and women who were scholars under both "dispensations,") who though they do not claim for it perfection, yet understand that it is the best that can at present be had, and in its results highly beneficial to the schools. Another class, are those who though not as well acquainted with its working, are yet willing to give it a fair trial, and when convinced of its efficiency, become its supporters. It is from this class that the friends of education are yearly receiving valuable additions. A third class embraces those "who having eyes see not, and having ears hear not the things that so nearly concern their temporal salvation," and who publicly declare that nobody is interested in school reports but a few of the literati.

Our schools for the year past have been very successful. The "boarding around" act creates but little sensation here, as taxing the scholar has long been out of date, and the law is stretched to meet all other emergencies. But the practice of boarding around is gradually diminishing and the time will soon come when it will be known only in history.

The subject of greater thoroughness in elementary instruction demands our special attention. I believe the time has fully arrived when the public are justified in demanding of our teachers better qualifications. I believe we should yearly elevate the standard of qualifications, and insist upon the applicants coming up very near to its requirements. For my own part I intend to take a more decided stand than that of the previous year, and have given notice to that effect. Experience has taught me the valuable lesson that no teacher is likely to be successful, unless he is able, when free from embarrassment, to satisfy the superintendent upon examination, that he possesses the requisite information to ensure success. I think the practice of licensing teachers to teach certain schools, when their learning is not sufficient to justify the superintendent in giving them license, provided he did not know where they intended to teach, opens a flood-gate of mischief. If the school is backward they need the best of instruction; if composed of small scholars it certainly requires more experience, ability and tact to teach them successfully than it does to teach an older class of pupils. So that in either case a greater error is committed than when a poorly qualified teacher is admitted into an advanced school.

I believe also that a State Normal School would be of infinite value to our educational system.

H. C. WOODWARD, Concord.

The impressions for another page in the history of Vermont Schools have been taken, and if written out in full would be very interesting; particularly so, could they be written in such a manner that the eye could trace them to *final results*. O! what a picture gallery for the interested and careful beholder. Would not such a view stimulate all who are connected with educational interests to persevering effort? Could we all stand at the farther end of life's journey, and see the results which *our own* course has produced upon our own children and those who come after us, how soon would all the animosities and bickerings that hinder and distract our schools cease forever; and with what earnestness should we labor to produce the best possible results. We certainly need some such view in this place to put us on the right track, and stir us up to do the right thing in the right time, and to leave undone a great many wrong things. But bad as we manage, and slow as we move, we have done something, are getting into working order, and really making a *little*

progress. There is less of open and determined division, more of a willingness to conform to the laws of the State and have them fairly administered. This is true in relation to the old practice of boarding around in some form. Some of the most inveterate are giving it up, and on the whole there seems to be an increased desire to make our schools respectable and profitable.

Teachers' Institutes are not appreciated because they are not well attended by our citizens—hence, not understood. All who do attend feel richly paid; perhaps the whole lump may yet be leavened. For the first time in several years, my annual report was this year called for and read. If it awakened one thought in the right direction, I certainly am glad of it; but upon the whole think I should have taken more time and been more careful in preparing it, if I had not expected that, like its predecessors, "it was born to blush unseen."

Our schools have very many good things about them, and they have some defects. The most prominent is, perhaps, a want of *point*, and thoroughness in the manner of teaching. Perhaps it would not be saying too much, to say that teachers have not a clear knowledge of what they are to teach, certainly not of the *manner* of teaching. There is great lack of clearness and accuracy in stating, and that perseverance that knows no such word as *fail*, in illustrating, enforcing and impressing the thing to be taught on the mind. Nor is the fault all the teachers'. Scholars want to get on rapidly, and estimate *real* progress in the same way. Hence the practice and the need of going over the same studies term after term. Hence, too, that little learning that is a dangerous thing. Another defect is in the management of the schools. Scholars are not taught to respect the school-house and the rights of the district, to respect their school-mates and the rights of each other. They are not taught "good behavior" in that sense that will truly fit them for the social and business relations of good American citizens.

LOOMIS WELLS, Granby.

What we lack to make our schools profitable, is good and convenient school-houses and a sufficient number of well-qualified teachers. It is very poor economy to put an unqualified teacher into one of our old dilapidated school-houses, because taxes are high and we must get along cheap.

For the past few years the great energies of the nation have been absorbed in a great and important struggle, and the cause of education along with other moral reforms, has suffered by neglect. But this should only stimulate us to renewed energy in the advancement of those causes that go to make a sober, honest, temperate and intelligent people. And no where can these ends be so well accomplished as at a well-organized, well-instructed common school. Each scholar knows that his or her name is to be recorded in the register of the school, with their scholarship, deportment and the regularity or irregularity of their attendance, and that it is not only to be known in their own school, but it is to be made known to others; and any scholar who has any respect for his good name will strive to show a good record. In this respect, I think the register of great importance to the school. Again, they are of great importance on account of the statistical information they contain, when properly kept; and in this connection I would say that the teachers have, with one or two exceptions kept a good record. I can't say as much for the district clerks. When I came to fill out my report to the Secretary, I found that many of the clerks had left out important information which it was a good deal of work to look up, and which they might have inserted in a moment's time, and saved considerable trouble. Our teachers, with one exception, attended the Teachers' Institute held for this County, and the effect of that Institute was plainly to be seen in our schools. And I wish that every person who intends to teach would attend them.

When our school law was first passed the reports of the Board of Education were received, distributed, and laid away, and we heard but little about them. I find now that they are read, and we frequently hear them referred to as a source of important

information. They bring us into immediate connection with a large amount of knowledge that is of vital importance to us as individuals and as a nation.

The practice of boarding around is almost done away with in our town. There are one or two districts that stick to the old practice, and the effect has been in one instance at least, that the teacher has been better qualified to travel over a territory of four miles in extent to get his board, than to teach school.

I think it is of incalculable importance that our schools be well instructed in the first principles, and I have insisted that the elementary principles should be thoroughly taught; and I think that the study of Intellectual Arithmetic should be more generally introduced into our Common Schools.

FRANKLIN BELL, Lunenburg.

The schools of this town have, on the whole, prospered the past year. The advancement is not what it should have been, is not what it would have been had parents given more attention to the education of their children. The teachers have been fully competent in all respects, and had they had the co-operation of parents instead of their opposition, much more might have been accomplished.

In looking over the schools of the town the past year and noticing the discord and jars in some of the districts, I am almost led to the conclusion that our schools exist by accident, without cause or design on the part of those for whose good we are taxed every year, and our present school system framed.

In one district in this town the summer school was literally broken up and the public money worse than thrown away by those, who, of all others, should have given it their warmest support—those who have children to be benefitted thereby. Still, as a whole, the schools have prospered better than might be expected. The failure alluded to is, perhaps, no greater than many others in many other towns.

Parents do neglect, and sadly too, the important duty of visiting the schools, but hire the teacher, and if the *scholars* are satisfied, well, whether they learn anything or not. This is more from habit, I think, than any lack of interest, or any lack of the proper valuation of the time devoted to them, or of the benefits which ensue therefrom. I think that negligence in this and most other respects is habitual. What can be done at any time is apt not to be done at all. The rule is good in this case, also.

When parents as a whole see the necessity of working with the teacher in preventing absence and tardiness, and aiding the teacher in his labors in promoting good discipline in school, we have then reached the maximum of our school system.

JOHN R. LEE, Victory.

One of the great drawbacks to the success of the district schools in this town is lack of decent and comfortable school houses. But I am glad to say there is a movement in two or three districts to improve the appearance of the sheep pens in which we have hitherto herded our children. It is really astonishing what miserable and unhealthy school rooms parents are willing to confine their children in. And the only plea I have heard any of them make for the outrage is, that school houses now are as good as those in which our fathers attended school fifty years ago. It is sufficient answer to such to say that school houses and other houses corresponded then; and they ought to now, but do not. Improvement in school houses ought to correspond with improvement in other houses. Why not?

We fail to secure a consolidation of districts sufficiently large to give us a basis for a good graded school, though frivolous local prejudice is all that stands in the way.

I will call attention again to the fact that we need some general law compelling towns of certain size and situation to support a school of the grade of our common academies. Contemptible local prejudice is the worst foe our graded schools have. I fear we shall not be able to rise above it.

G. F. WRIGHT, Bakersfield.

I have served as Superintendent the last half of the year only, and of course cannot have so full a knowledge of the schools as otherwise. I have visited the schools twice each.

I find the school seats very inconvenient. The pupils cannot sit with any degree of comfort in the seats in any school room in town, for one hour and a half at a time.

I find young people visiting the schools who go to have a good time. Schools should be visited only by those who have age and experience, and will encourage and advise the pupils.

There is deficiency in the qualifications of teachers. There seems to be a disposition to hire cheap teachers without due regard to qualifications. It should be remembered that the principles of true education are involved in first lessons. If first lessons are not comprehended, very bad consequences will follow. We want a finished workman to plaster our parlors, but anybody can form the minds and characters of our children.

J. S. SMALL, Enosburgh.

I found upon looking over the registers of the different districts, that some of the material which was intended to afford reliable information in making out my report, to be unsatisfactory. The different teachers throughout the town, however, have performed their part very satisfactorily. The registers betoken care to them in the discharge of their duties. Several came in with scarcely a blot, or in any other way defaced. While I am eager to commend those teachers who have thus given proof of their care and tidy habits, I am no less eager to deprecate the slovenly want of interest manifested on the part of others. A lack of care is more traceable to the district clerks. Several questions were here answered by "I do not know," or "I can't tell," which amounts to very much the same thing; showing they had failed to inform themselves as they ought.

The different schools have all, with one exception, been supplied by experienced teachers. Advancement has been plainly visible from day to day. The number of weeks taught by males has been forty-six—while the number taught by females has been two hundred and twenty.

That time evidently seems past when, in securing teachers, physical force is the first thing looked for to govern our schools, rather than able and ever attentive persons to instruct the pupils.

I believe that the introduction of "lady teachers" into both summer and winter schools is proving vastly beneficial to the educational interests of the State. And it needs no theory to prove this; it is evident to any one who will mark the advancement (and this is one of the causes,) made in our common schools for the past eight or ten years.

Among other causes to which this rapid advancement is due, is, I believe, holding teachers responsible—in requiring them to accurately keep the registers, so that they not only prove disciplinary in their character, but are also the source to which we must look for all reliable statistical information. Again, Teachers' Institutes, which are being holden from time to time in all parts of the State, are, in effect, highly beneficial. But it is impossible to make a poor teacher a good one in the short space of two days. We need to have established a State Normal School. There is nothing connected with educational interest which I more desire to see put through.

V. D. ROOD, Fletcher.

During the past winter I have visited well conducted and eminently successful schools. I have also visited unprofitable ones. When I reflect upon the deplorable influence of a badly managed school upon the character of the young, and its utter uselessness so far as a right development of the mind is concerned, I am led to inquire, at whose door shall we cast the blame, and wherein lies the remedy? Indeed, can a remedy be found, or shall this great and crying evil of unsuccessful

schools continue forever? I am led to believe that a great many share in the blame generally. The parent, the pupil and the teacher, each has something to do. Each of the parties is, in a majority of cases, at fault. But I have a firm conviction that, in nine cases out of ten, parents are especially censurable. By their action and influence it is in their power to render almost useless the best efforts of a faithful and competent instructor. On the other hand, they have it in their power in a thousand ways to lend a helping hand to even the most ordinary teacher, and thus bring it to pass that his labors are not a failure. They have usually a kind of interest in the matter of common schools. But it too often shows itself in a very objectionable way. It almost always appears in attacks of censure upon the teacher. The children catch the same spirit of fault-finding and carry it with them to the school room. Every teacher should receive the hearty co-operation of each resident in the district wherein he labors, so long as this can be given consistently. If it appears that he is decidedly unfit for the position he occupies, or is grossly negligent in the discharge of his duties, it is the part of wisdom and of kindness to talk with him in private. He may amend. If he does not amend, the practice of circulating unfavorable reports about a teacher never results in good to any one. The effect of it upon scholars is positively injurious.

M. DAVIDSON, Franklin.

I regard the Teachers' Institutes of the first importance, not only to teachers but to the community at large could they be induced to attend them. Many of our female teachers regretted not being able to attend the last winter owing to the bad going and their remoteness in this county. Can't you, Mr. Secretary, remember the needy, and give old Georgia an institute this year? I think it about time we had our turn.

In visiting the schools I find, with but few exceptions, too much of the old dull routine of teaching pursued, patterning after their own early training. Inexperienced teachers lack that aptness and originality so essential to awaken and keep up a proper interest throughout the term.

The following is an extract from my report to the town meeting:—

But in many respects our common schools, which may compare favorably with those of other towns around us, are very far behind the progress of the times, and, in many cases, cheap as they are, worth less than they cost. These are some of the reasons.

1st. The primary branches are too much neglected, while Greenleaf's mathematical puzzles are considered of sufficient importance to engage a large portion of the teacher's time. More stress is laid upon wading through big text books, than in laying a good foundation of the first rudiments. And our young and inexperienced teachers who have originated in these schools adopt the same plan in teaching, and are commended in so doing by the patrons of the schools, when, perhaps, these same teachers who may be well versed in their favorite studies of the higher branches, are themselves very far from being good readers or spellers.

2nd. Parents themselves are as much responsible for the condition of their schools, as the teachers. When the time comes that liberal, capable and interested prudential committees are selected, who, when they employ teachers take into account the value they are going to receive as well as the number of dollars per month for it; when parents visit the schools as often as they do their friends and neighbors, to see if the teacher is doing his duty, if their children are supplied with all the needful books, and if their conduct is as good as it *should be* at home—see if the school room is made as comfortable and cheerful as their own homes and has all the necessary appendages, such as blackboards, maps and globes, and even a clock which they would miss so much at home; when teachers and scholars are cheered and encouraged by these millennial signs then may we expect to see good scholars, good teachers and good schools.

C. H. LOOMIS, Georgia.

Among the items of improvement the past year, as it regards the conditions of schools in town, are two new school houses built, an old one repaired, and the setting in operation of a graded school at the village. The last movement especially met with a good deal of opposition, and particularly near the close of the year as the taxes come to be collected—it developed itself more strongly than before. The committee of the district had provided the schools with out line maps, globes, dictionaries, &c.,—they fixed up the fence and out buildings round the school house—they even furnished one of the rooms with Boston furniture—in looking for teachers they thought best to seek for good ones rather than cheap ones—they boarded them in one place, and not around, as had been the practice more or less heretofore; and inasmuch as they had had most of the time three teachers instead of two as formerly, and nine months of school during the year instead of six or seven, of course the aggregate expenses for the year counting up a good deal more than usual, and were getting to be to the minds of some, well nigh “awful.”

An extract or two, however, from the report of the committee, presented at the annual school meeting, may perhaps not be without interest here, not only as showing how things did actually appear in this particular case when they came to be looked over carefully, but also as casting some light upon the general working of the graded system, and the real economy of good schools—whatever they cost as compared with those whose great recommendation is that they are *cheap*. In regard to the expenses of the schools they say: “Your committee are well aware that the aggregate expense of the schools for the past year have been considerably larger than heretofore. They are free to acknowledge also, that while it has been their purpose to manage the schools in all things with a good degree of economy—so that at least there should be no wasteful expenditure—their first aim has been from the beginning to secure if possible, schools of a thoroughly high character. And with this point in mind, of course the efforts were directed, in the first place, to the securing so far as it could be done, of thoroughly good teachers, as it is very easy for every one to understand that this is the first thing in order to good schools, and such teachers are, of course, not ordinarily to be obtained without paying in some degree proportionately high wages. The fact, however, in regard to the teachers employed the past year, is simply this: they have received, with a single exception, just what they had had, or could have elsewhere, and so, if we were to have them, there was no way to do, but just to pay them what we did.”

The committee then refer to the increased (money) expenses of board this year as compared with former years, and particularly in view of the additional teacher and the increased length of school, as being one of the items that has helped very much to swell the aggregate expense. They then make the following calculations with reference to the cost of the schools for this (now) past year, and the previous.

“It appears from the reports of the district clerks as contained in the registers, that reckoning board at the rate per week which we are now obliged to pay, three dollars, and the cost of the schools in these (then) two districts—would have been \$408.59, or dividing by 28, the number of weeks of school last year—\$14.59 per week. Dividing this now by the average attendance (39) and we have the cost a scholar per week thirty seven and four-tenths cents. Doing the same with regard to the schools this year with an average attendance of 82, and the result is thirty one and three tenths cents. Or actually a fraction over six cents a week less than last year.

Or leaving out if you please all addition for incurring increased expense of schools this year, on any plan—and taking the figures, board and all, just as they stand in the Registers—and make the same calculations and we find then, the actual cost a week per scholar to have been 31.7, leaving still a slight balance in favor of this year.

This result,” they go on to say, “is reached, of course, only because of the

greatly increased attendance this year as compared with last,—and this, it is thought, is due mainly to three things :

1. To the character of the teachers employed, especially as it regards their ability to interest the scholars and lead them to desire to go to school.

2. To the large number of scholars that have been in our schools, under the present system, who otherwise would have been either away at school, or not in any school, and in a great measure losing their time. And

3. To the greatly increased interest in the minds of parents and the community generally, in regard to the schools, and the importance of a full and regular attendance. And all these things, it is believed, are in a very great degree, if not almost solely, the result of the adoption by the District of the *new or graded system of schools*.

There is another result of this, they go on to say, which simply in an economical point of view, is of importance, as it will be seen at once, that our average this year as compared with last, ought to give us, of that portion of the public money which is divided according to the average, more than twice the amount which was received last year."

They then make a comparison of The cost of their schools with the cost of those elsewhere in the State, as shown by the statistics given in your report. These statistics, of course, being made up from schools of all grades and qualities, while their schools have all of them been above the average in quality, and their higher department has afforded advantages, open to all the children of the district, equal to those afforded by any Academy. And here the result is as follows—(omitting entirely from their calculation the item in the General Report for "Building School Houses") :

"Average cost a week per scholar in the State,	\$3.52
ditto in our own schools,	3.13."

Taking again the item of Teachers' wages only, and they have this result :

"Average cost a week per scholar in the State	18½
ditto in our own schools,	15½

or nearly one-sixth less than the actual average cost of Teachers' wages throughout the State, of all kinds and descriptions."

"And so it appears," they continue, "as a matter of fact that our schools this year, instead of costing more per scholar, have actually cost less than they did last or than they do on an average throughout the State. And this saying *nothing of the greatly superior advantages afforded the children of the district this year as compared with former years, or as compared with those afforded generally by the schools of the State.*"

And this view of the matter certainly seems to show, not only that our schools upon the present plan have been as cheap and even cheaper than heretofore, per scholar, but in proportion to the advantages afforded, much cheaper, and that in fact as a permanent arrangement for the thorough education of the children of the community, year after year, and generation after generation, there is really no other plan really as cheap."

I do not think there is any danger of a return to the old plan, at present. There is a good deal of dissatisfaction as it regards the manner of dividing the public money — i. e. (three fourths of it) entirely according to the average attendance, without any regard to the aggregate, or rather without any regard to the length of time, a school has been kept up during the year. It is thought so far as it has any influence at all it will operate to diminish rather than increase the amount of school that will be sustained in different districts, beyond what is required by law, inasmuch as it will ordinarily be easier to have a high average for a short term than a long one, and so with a short school a district will be likely to get actually more of the Public Money, than with a long one. If the law could some way be changed so that perhaps a half, or some proper proportion, of what is now divided according to the average, be divided in proportion

to the *amount* of school kept, or the amount beyond what the public money will pay for, it would seem that it might be a change for the better, and stimulate to an increased *amount* of school, as well as to increased regularity of attendance while the school is in session—both of which objects will be recognized as exceedingly desirable, and the latter at least not *less* so than the former.

Ought our children, especially in our villages, to be running wild well nigh half the year, losing in vacation a good share of what they have learned, and learning to do a thousand things they *ought* not? Is it good *economy* to allow it to be so? Surely anything which will tend to encourage a more liberal policy in this respect is at least worthy of consideration, and certainly anything which is likely to hinder in any way such a policy ought to be corrected.

Your suggestion in your Report, in regard to the manner of superintendence, seems to me a good one, viz : a return in some sort to the old County Superintendent plan. And yet a change in that respect would amount to nothing unless a sufficiently liberal policy should be framed by the State, as it regards salary, to enable a sufficiently qualified and energetic man to devote his time pretty much to the duties of his office. A proper superintendence of the schools in this County (Franklin) would require the best *energies* of any man during at least the entire time when schools are ordinarily in session, and I most sincerely believe that the employment of a proper person who should devote his *entire time* to this work in each (or at least with one or two exceptions), of the Counties of the State would be one of the best paying investments which our State could make.

The great trouble with town superintendents seems to be that nobody that has any business to attend to can really find time for these duties, and couldn't even if the pay was something better than an *insult*, when spoken of as *remuneration* for the kind and amount of service required.

You will notice, from the statistics, that *ten* of our teachers the past year have boarded "round," notwithstanding the change in the law.

There will be, I think, considerable call for a revision of the present list of school books, when the time comes, next year.

GEO. B. TOLMAN, Sheldon.

Herein please find as accurate a summary or digest of very obviously inaccurate reports—sworn to by the several district clerks—as after long figuring, inquiry, and some guessing, I am able to make.

There have been in attendance upon the High School and its subordinate departments 864 different scholars. Average daily attendance 448—crowded beyond the possibility of proper grading by the number of primary scholars crowding the more advanced faster than they can safely go. We need more school room.

J. S. D. TAYLOR, St. Albans.

I think the greater part of teachers that have come under my observation have neglected learning to read and spell in their younger days. One reason why I come to this conclusion is, that out of thirteen or fourteen teachers examined by me the past year, not one-half of them could give a specimen in penmanship without misspelling words, to say nothing about missing in common spelling. I think teachers that will spell words through without pronouncing the syllables and then perhaps not pronounce the word when done, are not the kind that should be employed in teaching children. The most that some do in learning scholars to read is to correct when words, in their opinion, are improperly pronounced, and the pupil is permitted to hurry through as fast as possible. Of course but very few become good readers. But few teachers are qualified for teaching penmanship for the reason they have never learned the art themselves. I think the greater part of our teachers are tolerably well qualified for teaching

arithmetic, grammar, and geography. There are those that are learning Latin and Greek, when, in my opinion, they should be studying the spelling book, if they would become successful teachers in our common schools.

C. S. PARKER, Elmore.

From observation I am confident that our plan of keeping registers is a means of much improvement in our schools. Teachers and pupils feel that at a glance the Superintendent can inspect and judge of their interest in the school. Institutes and annual reports are of inestimable value, and are becoming more and more appreciated.

I am happy to state that we have tried the "grading" plan in our village the past term, and that with general satisfaction; so much so that at our annual meeting we voted to build a new school house and have a graded school. This is a step in the right direction. "The world moves;" let the friends of education take courage.

J. G. BAILEY, Hydepark.

If I am prepared to judge of the schools, I give them credit for much that is good. The teachers have generally demeaned themselves with propriety in the school room, and elsewhere. They have been faithful in their work, and have succeeded in giving good tone to their schools. In some instances they were insufficiently remunerated for their service, but, as a town, we are approximating to a fair compensation to teachers. The scholars have shown much good feeling among themselves, and commendable interest in their studies.

The reports of teachers in their registers, a few excepted, were very imperfect. But they were faultless when compared with those of the district clerks. I make no pretensions to a perfect report, but believe I have done the best I could with the materials in the registers, and what I could gather by personal inquiry.

I spent at least three days at hard labor, trying to answer the questions you ask. But I would not dispense with the registers. They are educators. They fill a place in our common school system that was blank previous to their introduction. I do not think much, however, of the column of remarks by visitors. The descriptions are one sided and full of flattery. I give two examples quite characteristic. "No. A school." and, "the best school ever taught in town." A dirty school room, noisy boys and girls, imperfect recitations, and mispronunciation by teachers,—are not found among the remarks of visitors.

The Teachers' Institute is, in my opinion, one of the *great* advantages of our day. Every town whose teachers attend it is benefited a hundred fold.

The boarding around system is gradually expiring in our town, but four out of the twenty-five who taught, having had to submit to its impropriety.

L. B. STEELE, Johnson.

I am happy to report a commendable improvement in manner and correctness of the returns rendered by the district clerks in answering the statistical questions addressed to them over those of the preceding year; though some of the registers were not so near perfection as the exercise of due thought and diligence would otherwise undoubtedly have rendered them.

The Institutes that I have attended, very favorably impressed me with their utility, as a source of practical instruction to teachers in the difficult science of teaching, and, yet more, in awakening and giving tone to public sentiment touching all the great educational topics of the day.

The recent enactment terminating the practice of "boarding around" is looked upon with disfavor by some, and in two districts, the evident *spirit*, if not the letter of the law, has been nullified, and the old custom adhered to of apportioning the board on the grand list.

B. S. WILLEY, Waterville.

In our country where the people are a power in the government, general education has ever been an interest of paramount importance ; and at no period in the history of our government has this interest been more obvious than at the present. The actual necessity of a thorough education of all the people in order that republican institutions may be sustained, is apparent to all careful observers—the persons who take note of cause and effect in those matters which have a bearing upon the prevalence of virtue or vice,—intelligence or ignorance among the people.

The common school system of Vermont is well adapted to our actual condition and wants. "The practical working" of the system is obviously favorable to the production of the desired result. School registers, Teachers' Institutes and annual reports seem now to be indispensable to the prosperity and success of our schools. The best proof of the utility of registers is in the fact that in proportion as they are neatly and accurately kept they are beneficial. Teachers and district clerks are the persons to whom registers are entrusted for safe and proper keeping, and when these persons are faithful in this respect, each district is furnished with a history from year to year of the condition of their schools. A teacher who is indifferent and careless in the manner of keeping the register is not worthy of the position. An examination of school registers on file in the Town Clerk's office would enable a Superintendent to form a correct opinion of the character and success of the several teachers having had charge of them.

Teachers' Institutes are no longer an experiment. The writer of these remarks has had some acquaintance with these Institutes for twenty years as they have been held in Massachusetts, New Hampshire and our own State. Their usefulness and efficiency in Orange County for seven years past cannot with consistency be called in question. No fact is more obvious than this, that the teacher gives character to the school. There are all grades of schools, and the inhabitants of different districts are not uniform in manifesting a commendable interest in the welfare of the schools. After these and other concessions are made, it is still true that the teacher is the controlling and guiding spirit of the school. Her spirit is infused in the minds of her pupils and may be observed in all that they are and do. She is accountable for the order, interest and progress of the school. Any agency then which has the effect to improve teachers, whereby they are rendered more interested in the duties of teaching and more efficient as instructors, should, for these reasons, be well sustained. This may be claimed for Teachers' Institutes. Generally those teachers that frequent them are better prepared for their work ; the spirit of inquiry and improvement is awakened ; and these teachers are not content to remain stationary in their attainments, but are pressing forward and seeking to attain a higher standard of qualifications.

It is my opinion if our Teachers' Institutes were held four days instead of two, the effect would soon be manifest in an improved condition of the schools, the natural result of more interest and a superior preparation on the part of teachers.

Carefully prepared annual reports are necessarily useful. They have a direct influence upon Superintendents and teachers. The Superintendents, who are expected and required by usage to prepare and present a report to the town, cannot be indifferent in regard to the character of their reports. To make a report what it should be, it is necessary that the Superintendent should be familiar with the condition of the schools, that their defects and excellencies may be placed before the citizens. Teachers partake of this spirit of improvement. There is on their part a laudable ambition to excel. The practice of printing annual reports cannot be too highly commended.

There is, no doubt, in many schools a serious defect in the want of thoroughness in elementary instruction. There cannot be good scholarship if first things are neglected or superficially learned. Teachers, themselves, too often on exam-

ination, find themselves deficient in the elementary branches of a fair English education. It is so in all departments of business or labor—a neglect of first principles is detrimental to substantial advancement.

JOSHUA BRITTON, Bradford.

Teachers, with two exceptions, have answered the questions addressed to them so as to give the required information, but nearly all the district clerks have been careless in making their returns. While visiting the schools the past year with a view to ascertaining their real condition, I found a few of them making commendable progress. In districts where inexperienced teachers have been employed, there has been a want of order and a lack of thoroughness in elementary instruction, which is indispensable as a basis of education.

Prudential committees should be more careful in the selection of teachers, and instead of hiring cheap teachers they should secure the services of able and experienced ones, even if they have to pay much higher wages.

Tardiness and irregularity of attendance are great evils and cannot be remedied till parents are fully awakened to the importance of educating their children. Boarding around I regard as a bad practice, yet is likely to continue, as most of the districts in town board their teachers around on the grand list, as formerly.

ELIJAH HARRINGTON, Braintree.

There has evidently been good interest manifested by the people of this town as to the welfare of their schools. I judge that a deeper interest is felt than before the enactment of the recent school law. More pains is taken generally to secure efficient teachers, and to otherwise improve the condition of the schools. Citizens, generally, are more decidedly of the opinion that it is a much better practice to employ competent and efficient teachers than those of inferior capacity, though the latter be obtained for a less price than the former.

I think it is generally conceded that, by the introduction of the school register into the schools, much improvement has been made, especially in the regular and punctual attendance of scholars, thereby benefitting the schools in several ways.

Much value is attached to the Teachers' Institutes, as they serve to awaken and stir the public mind in regard to school matters, and also to awaken and more effectually prepare the teachers for their important duties.

I believe the property of the State should sustain the common schools of the State, and then all classes will have an equal chance for a common school education; that the poor may have an equal chance with the wealthy in obtaining that education which will prepare each and all for intelligent and useful citizens, and to be a blessing to themselves.

In regard to the law respecting the discontinuance of boarding around, I am decidedly of the opinion that it is a great advance in the right direction if the law is carried out as intended. I am confident our schools should and can become better by providing for the teacher a permanent boarding place. More time will be given to the teacher by which to become more efficiently prepared to perform a greater amount and better work in the school room. I am sure it is the sense of a large majority of the people of this town that the teacher should board at one place; and every district, with two or three exceptions, have adopted this course.

S. P. WILCOX, Brookfield.

When we consider how large a portion of the children of the State receive their education at the public schools, and how far early training goes to mould the character and shape the destiny of the individual, we may realize in some degree the importance of elevating the character of our public schools. And one thing as essential to their improvement as perhaps any other, is a greater thoroughness in elementary instruction. Were it the whole business of educa-

tion to store the mind with a few isolated facts, the systems of instruction now mostly in practice in our common schools might do very well. But in consideration of the higher ends of mental culture and discipline to be attained, we can but conclude that we come far short of realizing the high standard of excellence to which we should labor to elevate these fountains of intelligence.

Our teachers need the advantages of normal instruction. The Institutes furnish this in a degree, but not to the extent required, owing to the short time allowed for each session. Yet, amid these discouraging circumstances, we are able to discover signs of progress. We have secured a uniformity of text books, and a consequent improvement of classification. There is a higher standard of qualifications among teachers, more inquiry on the part of prudential committees for good, instead of cheap teachers, some improvement in the method of instruction, and I wish I might add, in discipline, as well.

During the past winter we held three teachers' meetings for the discussion of methods of instruction and other matters pertaining to the schools. Though not accomplishing all that we might—with the more generous co-operation of the friends of education; it is believed that they were at least a step in the right direction.

P. CHANDLER, Chelsea.

In the main, for the past year, our schools have been successful, and in some particulars made very decided improvement upon the year previous.

My statistical report will undoubtedly suggest one culpable non-compliance of the districts with the peremptory requisition of the statute for the sustaining a two months' school &c., as a necessary prerequisite to their receiving any share of the public money.

This violation, in part, resulted from a careless and niggardly attitude of the districts, which was further stimulated into growth by an unwise and indefensible toleration of the selectmen in not exercising the proper discrimination in the distribution of the school money.

Either the method of dividing the public money, in this particular, should be repealed, or made more effectual and equitable by instituting suitable forfeitures in case the selectmen shall knowingly disregard its provisions.

In the opinion of your Superintendent, some expedient ought to be devised to make the public examination of teachers more properly answer the true intent of the law.

If a public examination of teachers is advisable and conducive to the welfare of the common school, the propriety certainly demands the compliance of all teachers in this respect; and yet not a quarter part of our teachers ever present themselves at a public examination.

We are among those who believe that, at a public examination, not only its legitimate purposes can be more successfully attained, but, if properly conducted, much good can be done for our common schools by presenting suitable incentives before the teachers and stimulating them to employ that instruction and discipline, as will best secure the highest order of intellectual development.

Our schools have suffered exceedingly from a defective district system.

Should we divide the daily average attendance (270) by the whole number of districts (23) we have only eleven and a fraction to a district; and yet the actuality is still more unfavorable, for while four or five are well sustained numerically, some eight districts have an average of less than seven scholars.

The pernicious tendency of this expensive system is apparent in the miserable mediocrity of their school instruction, resultant upon a false economy of cheap teachers and the absence of a wholesome emulation among the scholars.

We are happy to report, however, that the recent statute placing the support of the common schools upon the grand list, has admirably removed the scepticism of our citizens, in this particular, who are now contemplating a radical reform in their district system.

The Teachers' Institute, which the town was so fortunate as to enjoy last summer, was productive of excellent results.

We cannot prize the beneficial influences of these institutes too highly, and our legislature, if it rightly appreciated the importance of this powerful auxiliary in our common school system, would be more generous in their appropriations for its support.

The great desideratum of our schools is thorough, critical instruction and systematic discipline.

The teacher to be a successful instructor must, like the skillful artist, completely understand his art, and the nature of his subject—or, in other words, be educated for his profession.

Our institutes are doing much to accomplish this noble work, and are really indispensable agents in the circulation of useful instruction and experience, as well as a medium of reaching and arousing the people themselves to a proper interest in their schools.

But would not a further advance be judiciously made by planting normal institutes, under the supervision of the State, where, on the most liberal terms, teachers could be instructed and drilled in the great art of teaching.

Certainly the experiment has eventuated wisely and successfully elsewhere, and we can see no just reason why the State of Vermont cannot well afford to adopt an enterprise which will so vitally affect and elevate the condition of her common schools.

And lastly, the people themselves should foster a deeper and more earnest interest in the welfare and prosperity of their schools.

They should feel that *their* duty ends *not* in providing the means of public instruction, but should at all times extend to their school a willing and active co-operation.

Let them guard it as the apple of the eye, watch over it with a parental solicitude and sustain it with a religious devotion.

Then will the common school become what it ought to be, one of the dearest of our free institutions, the birth place of sound statemanship, the nursery of lofty patriotism, and, in fine, the foster-mother of constitutional liberty.

CALEB C. SARGENT, Corinth.

I seem to see a gradual, though slow, improvement in our schools. The teachers are of a slightly higher grade than those of the previous year. The people are slowly coming out of the dark to perceive that it much depends upon themselves, whether their schools are good or otherwise. Committees begin to ask for *first rate* teachers. Many of them are troubled to obtain the best, there being as yet fewer than the demand. But we may hope that through the efforts of the people and Superintendent, the present class of teachers may be compelled to improve themselves in order to retain situations in our common schools.

I have entered upon my third year of official duty as Superintendent. I have sought to make my examinations more rigid and thorough with each succeeding class, and I think I begin to see some good results. Much remains to be done, however; much for me, much for the people, to do, before the schools of our town take the noble position which I firmly believe is to be occupied by them in a future—I hope not distant—day.

EDWARD H. RANDALL, Randolph.

There is a sad lack of interest in our common schools in this town. It is a problem not yet solved, how shall the interest be aroused which would do the most for the training of the young for the greatest usefulness? Ignorant selfishness can rarely be useful. The low average attendance is significant. It shows that the degree of interest and also of improvement, must be small. Whole number 336; average 185.

Our schools are much less profitable on account of too great a variety of books,

as parents do not feel bound to furnish those required. Consequently some schools have as many or more classes than scholars. An effectual remedy would be beneficial.

JOHN L. SINCLAIR, Strafford.

It is to me a matter of deep regret that all our teachers cannot enjoy the advantages every year of attending a Teachers' Institute. They all need them; or especially our younger teachers.

The Annual Reports of the Secretary of the Board of Education, are, year by year, of increasing value. They ought to make, as they do, a strong and useful impression upon the public mind of the State.

The people here are falling in with the recent legislation of the State in regard to the boarding around of teachers. The report of next year will make that fact clear.

One great fault exists in our schools. There is an ambition to leave at too early a day the elementary studies, and to take those which require greater maturity of judgment. This appears in the pressing upward to the use of a reading book whose words and expressions and range of thought are far above their comprehension. There is an ambition to "go through" the arithmetic or the geography; and this ambition, in the teacher and farmer, is as strong, sometimes, as in the scholar; while there is only a superficial acquaintance with the first principles, on which the advantages of the study depend. Our children ought to learn "first things" in the public schools--the spelling book, the power to define words or clauses, the meaning of objects and things near by and of familiar use--these should become as well known as the alphabet. If these things are neglected in the school room, where can they be so well taken up? Upon this subject we must give "line upon line, precept upon precept."

LEONARD TENNEY, Theford.

Another cause of failure is the lack of co operation on the part of parents. Many of them seem determined to magnify the teachers' faults, rather than his virtues, which results in the very inconstant attendance of the scholars, and, in some instances, the withdrawing them from school altogether. I think the best of teachers fail of complete success without the assistance of parents; with that assistance, very indifferent teachers may succeed well. The great bane of all the schools is the great number of absences. To remedy this evil it was recommended in my report to the town, that one hundred dollars be appropriated to be divided among the districts according to the average attendance, for a prize to be awarded to those who have the least number of absences. This was adopted at the March Meeting, and it is supposed that such an appropriation will be made by the Selectmen. Would not such a measure, adopted by all the towns, increase the average attendance of scholars?

E. H. ALDEN, Tunbridge.

The spelling classes this winter have been larger and fewer than formerly and to the evident advantage of the school. As large classes as may be are very desirable; for if some are a little backward, they will be stimulated to move a little faster; and, the fewer the classes, the more time will the faithful teacher have for illustration and explanation. The teacher's business is not simply to hear lessons, but to impart instruction, according to the measure of ability.

All Superintendents probably find a great deficiency in the qualifications of very many who come to them for examination. In giving certificates, I have had regard both to the qualifications of those who present themselves, and to the demands of the districts. If I have been too lenient in the examination, it is the fault of the districts in demanding cheap teachers.

CHARLES DUREN, Vershire.

Our schools would derive a greater benefit from Superintendents' reports were they printed and placed in the hands of every family. The mothers and children as well as the fathers, should know the condition of the schools. Moreover, it would have a beneficial effect upon the teachers to know that the report is to be printed. It would act as a stimulant that their school might have a good report. We can report one favorable thing in regard to our schools, i. e. female teachers are receiving a just compensation for their services. There was no justice in paying a female only one third the wages that of a male teacher, when the school of the former was in every respect equal to, if not superior, to that of the latter. The school registers, Teachers' Institutes, annual reports, as well as the law in regard to boarding around, are all having their beneficial effects upon our schools.

GEO. E. LANE, Williamstown.

Institutes.—As to their true merit and importance, to those who have attended them nothing need be said. If they have not believed in their utility, to inspire a particle of faith would be such a miracle as no one reasonably expects in these latter days. To those who have never attended we would say, go and see and hear for yourselves, and then judge. I am satisfied for one that they have done much to educate teachers for their calling, as well as to inspire them with new life and energy.

Thoroughness in elementary instruction.—To neglect this, in my judgment, is like neglecting the foundations of a costly edifice, only much more disastrous in its results. I think this cannot be insisted on too earnestly. Take the single branch of mathematics, and what can be done to any good purpose without a thorough beginning? In my opinion, Colburn's Mental Arithmetic was the best thing ever given to the young student in mathematics. It contained all the germs of the science, and was the best basis of logic. It is worth more a thousand times (if we can have but one,) than either the Common School or National. And, by the way, I do not think the latter ever ought to become common in the district schools. Conversing one day with a teacher of an academy upon this subject, said he: "I will tell you where I received the beginning and foundation of my mathematics. It was in the old school room, when you taught me to answer logically the questions of Colburn's Arithmetic." I wish that no scholar might ever be allowed to pass over the elementary principles of the Common English, without a thorough training in them.

H. N. HOVEY, Albany.

The schools of Vermont are as good, perhaps, as those of any other State, yet they do not seem to be all they should be. The difficulty in them lies in no one person or thing; but in the pupil, the parent, the teacher and the public. The important and valuable efforts that have been made for the past few years by legislation and the Board of Education have done much for the schools, and need only to be seconded and supported by the public, to render them as good as any schools in the world. The public, though it has a general interest in the welfare of schools, does not feel that particular interest it ought to feel. The truth is, nothing tends so directly to elevate us as a people, as an improved system of education. The fruits of a summer school may not appear in the coming autumn; but in the years that are to follow, they will appear to benefit and bless the world. The parent who now fails to see the use of educating his children, will be made proud and happy in his declining years by the success and position of his son, prepared and educated for life's voyage, away back in the common school. To merely pay the current expenses of the schools is but the minor duty of the public. Schools should be cheerfully supported, visited, watched over—like other matters of importance. School houses should be made comfortable and attractive; they should be furnished with charts, maps, and apparatus, to aid the pupil in his labors, as the artisan is aided by the chisel and the brush. The best teachers should be employed. Experience in teaching is as valuable as any

thing else. The novice and apprentice cannot do the work of the practiced and skillful. Teachers should be paid so that they can afford to fit themselves for their vocation. They should be morally supported. Every citizen in the district should consider and make them their friend; and never should they be slandered and traduced for little mistakes and faults committed in their perplexing and difficult labors. Parents do not properly support and aid their schools. Their children, while they are taught to respect their teachers, should be sent punctually and constantly to school; they should be made to feel, at home, that school is of great importance to them. Teachers, as well as parents and the public, need to be trained to a better appreciation of schools. Many of them lack in education and thoroughness, as well as in the power to create an interest in their schools. It is not their fault entirely that they are inexperienced and incompetent, for they are not paid for proper qualifications for their vocation. If they lack somewhat in education, they can and should be thorough in whatever branches they teach. *A little learned is worth every thing gone over.* At present there is a tendency to bring into common schools those studies that are unfit to be brought there, and teachers from their own inclination and the desire of parents to get their, as they suppose, precocious children into the higher branches. The common schools are for common things. The elementary principles should be instilled there, and so permanently infixed in the minds of the pupils that nothing thereafter can eradicate them. No teacher can be too thorough in teaching elementary principles. Some teachers have too little energy. Scholars are inclined to indolence in the irksome labors of school, and need the example and constant effort of the teacher to drive away this spirit. A dead, drowsy, inactive school is a worthless one, and teachers should by all means strive to have a cheerful, busy and working school.

A duty that devolves at present upon teachers, the keeping of the registers, should not be neglected. Registers when properly kept, will tend directly to improve the school. The tardiness, absence and deportment that they record, can be used to encourage promptness, regularity and good behavior in the pupil. Teachers have now the excellent opportunity of attending Teachers' Institutes, and can benefit themselves greatly by this means. The Institutes are doing the State much good, and could they be held oftener, they would still be acceptable to the public and advantageous to school interests.

The great improvement made in the schools of this State for the past ten years, ought to encourage the friends of education and stimulate them to renewed efforts, that the remaining faults in the schools may be overcome, and that they may become the sure and firm basis of our future happiness and prosperity.

GEO. H. BLAKE, Barton.

I can speak only of the winter schools. These were all under the care of experienced teachers, most of them long tried in the school room and never found wanting; and the success of their schools furnishes additional evidence in favor of employing experienced teachers when practicable; and this becomes practicable when teachers' wages are sufficient to save teaching from the too general character of a *makeshift* between employment and nothing to do.

Those teachers who have taken the pains to attend the Teachers' Institute have brought to their school room duties, much practical good therefrom. Although much remains to be done, I am confident that we are steadily improving in the vital cause of public schools.

O. H. AUSTIN, Brownington.

There is evidently a waking up of interest to the condition of schools in this town; and there is need enough of it. This growing interest is brought about very much, I think, by a more careful looking after the proper attention, by teachers and district clerks, to the school registers; and also by the fact that such report as is called for goes annually to the Secretary of the Board of Edu-

cation. I think hereafter there will not be allowed a report of utter destitution of globes, maps, &c., in our school rooms.

LEVI LORING, Charleston.

As to remarks, I can only repeat about what I said last year, and would refer you to that. Another year's experience has confirmed what was then stated in respect to *considerable progress* in the schools, and the influence of registers and Institutes. Our people all, I think, very cordially concur in the law in reference to boarding around, for they have all boarded their teachers at one place.

A. R. GRAY, Coventry.

The schools in Derby, as a whole, have been very good. All but one of the teachers have had experience before the past year, and they have been zealous and faithful in the work.

Considerable money has been raised and expended in the repair of school houses during the year. All but two of the school houses in town are now very well adapted to their purpose; and I am hopeful that measures will be taken at once to put the two in question in thorough repair.

S. GOODENOUGH, Derby.

In relation to our common schools, the State legislature has manifested a commendable interest in them; but the people are very slow in coming to take that interest they ought in the district schools. It is lamentable that the untiring efforts of the State Superintendent should be better appreciated than they are. Would the people but manifest one-half the interest and zeal exhibited by a few of our most earnest workers in the cause of common school education, a rapid change would be apparent. The people as a whole are not sufficiently aroused to the importance of elevating the condition of the schools, and the existing defects, of which there is occasion for complaint, are mainly on the part of the people. In the main, they are contented that the scholars should plod on as they are with all their imperfections.

There is another tendency which is not particularly to be commended in most cases. I allude to the disposition to introduce studies into the common schools that more particularly belong to high schools and academies, to the neglect of the primary branches. But, were I to legislate concerning text books, I would introduce book keeping among the studies now pursued according to law in the district schools. Many a man of limited education often unexpectedly finds himself in a business that requires a knowledge of book keeping, and to his utter inconvenience he knows nothing about it, because it was not taught in the common schools. Practically, a knowledge of book keeping is as important as a knowledge of arithmetic. And to me it seems an oversight in all the legislation concerning text books up to the present date, that book keeping is not made a legal text book in our district schools.

GEO. SEVERANCE, Glover.

In my report which was prepared for the town, after having shown that our common school system is steadily advancing to a higher degree of efficiency and perfection—that under the liberal share of legislative attention it has received for the last ten years, and under the guidance and labors of the Board of Education and its Secretary, it has already come forth from the wilderness of speculation, doubt and indifference to the sunny heights from which its benign and quickening influences are falling upon the masses, resulting in a better appreciation, and a marked improvement of the schools, I endeavored to show that the system as yet is by no means perfect, and that we are not deriving from it more than than half the advantages we ought under its present workings.

The first defect we noticed was, that in the system no provision is made for the

education and training of teachers. This defect we contended was fundamental and must be removed by the establishment of a State Normal School.

We urged, in the second place, that the system would be rendered more efficient by associating the prudential committees in each town, with the Superintendent, as an examining board of teachers, and that the committees be restrained under pains and penalties from hiring any teacher who holds not in his hands a certificate from this board, or at least the Superintendent, who is to act as its president. There are some few objections, and many weighty reasons for this change.

Third, we contended that some means ought to be devised for the consolidation of districts, and the establishment of graded schools. It would blot out that multitude of small and poor schools that exist in the State, that legion of small, uncomfortable and dilapidated school houses, reduce the amount of fuel, the number of teachers to be paid and boarded, the babel of studies in each department, would reduce the price of education to all classes, lengthen or multiply the terms of schools, introduce a better class of teachers, a better class of school houses, dictionaries, globes, maps, and furniture, and necessarily concentrate in the school house more of interest with teachers, pupils and parents. I stated that there was really but one objection that could be urged, that was the inconvenience in distance to which some would be put.

But I saw the dairyman in this day, because he could get a little better cheese made, and because it would fetch a half a cent more per pound, carrying his milk, rain and sunshine, morning and evening, week days and Sundays, miles to a factory. The trouble was not to be mentioned. But, with some, cheese is much more valuable than children.

I intended to have noticed somewhat that we are suffering losses in the practical working of the system as it is; but the mail has arrived, and this must go. All in this place are coming to acquiesce in the law terminating the "boarding around."

J. H. WOODWARD, Irasburgh.

I am happy to state that our schools, with but few exceptions, have been quite successful the past year. The teachers in our winter schools have united energy with thoroughness in such a manner as to tell largely for the improvement of the pupils. Our school houses are all in good condition, the last old one having given place to a new one the past year. They are now the best class of houses in town, which is rather remarkable. Teachers' Institutes and Annual Reports are doing their designed work in a measure. Of the latter two very important points are neglected. The first is, Superintendents do not make as great an effort as they ought to make them interesting; and the second is, they are not circulated as extensively as they should be. I would have every family supplied with a copy at the expense of the town. Were this course pursued it would bring out more interesting reports from Superintendents, and awaken greater interest among parents. Our town is ready to expend all the money necessary for good schools, but the care of them is left too much to Superintendents and teachers. When shall we see this error corrected?

I cherish the hope that the good people of this town are beginning to look after their instructors, from the fact that the first examination I appointed in town was attended by myself only—not a candidate for teacher. The two last were quite fully attended. May the interest that now seems to be felt increase as time advances.

G. H. WHITCOMB, Jay.

For several years past the interest in common schools in Newport has been small. Our town has grown rapidly from a small insignificant place to a prosperous and wealthy village. The interest and welfare of our schools has not kept pace with the other interests in town, and to this day our school houses are

generally poor, and not a globe, map, nor any book of reference can be found in any school house in town. Our own village, prosperous beyond the anticipations of any, filled with visitors who come from afar to admire our beautiful scenery, and eager speculators to gain a paltry dollar—has not a school house fit for a French bar-room; and though a few have struggled long and hard to create some interest in our schools, their efforts are almost entirely fruitless. Fortunately last fall our worthy Secretary of the Board of Education held his annual Institute for Orleans County in this town. The first day he became nearly discouraged, and came near adjourning the Institute to some remote place in the country, simply because the people would not come in, and he was compelled to speak to empty seats—no interest was manifested. But by the second day a few stirring young men succeeded in getting in a respectable representation of our people, and before the Institute was closed the house was full. His stirring appeals began to excite the people who had so long thought education a mere secondary matter to that of money making. And the salutary effect of that Institute can only be realized by one who has noticed the remarkable change that is now being wrought in our district schools. Our schools during the winter were well attended, often visited by parents and committees, and a lively interest was manifested in them throughout the whole term. Our school meetings were better attended, money was freely voted to build new and to repair old school houses, and even in town meeting the voters had the magnanimity to vote a liberal compensation to the Town Superintendent, and instructed him to visit the schools at the expense of the town, while one year ago, you might as well have undertaken to move Lake Memphremagog into the dry pond in Glover, as to raise money in town meeting to pay a Superintendent anything extra for his services. Our village district was sadly in debt, the school house tumbling to pieces, the seats having been mostly used up for kindling wood, is now clearing up the debt, and the school house undergoing a thorough repair. The cause of all this reformation is the Teachers' Institute held here last fall. I thus speak at length of the fact as much better illustrating the benefits of these Institutes than any mere opinion I might express.

The operations of the school registers is very favorable in our schools reducing the whole thing to a system, and has the same effect in our schools that the system of reports have in an army, and are inestimable in their good results. The practice of boarding around has nearly ceased, and the legislature has taken one step more in the right direction by not sanctioning such a heartless practice.

L. H. BISBEE, Newport.

For the last ten years there has been a gradual improvement in our schools. The people are waking up. Some complain of our school law; but as a general thing, they consider it good. One section, in my opinion, should be changed, that is, in reference to the division of the public money. The shorter the school the larger the average attendance. Would it not be well to have the money divided according to the whole number of days' attendance, instead of the average daily attendance? It appears to me it would be more just. Three new school houses are to be built in town the coming summer. I have in some districts called the people together evenings and spoke to them in relation to their schools, and have always found them full of interest and ready to do almost anything that would tend to make the schools better. And I think the present year will find many of our schools supplied with globes, maps, dictionaries, &c., which will add much to their efficiency.

M. F. VARNEY, Troy.

The influence of Teachers' Institutes is good, but it seems to me we want more of it. I think that so far as this neighborhood is concerned, the minds of our teachers need more than a jog from the nervous elbow of our Secretary once a year. They need to be taken in hand by him and stretched a little. They can sit very compla-

cently for a couple of days and hear him tell of the defects in teaching, and the deficiencies of teachers. But every one is glad that the Secretary does not know how it is with each individual teacher before him. Now, it seems to me that if, instead of two days, there could be a session of two weeks, and a class of teachers could be taken and drilled in grammar, and geography and arithmetic, and in reading and spelling, this would add a spur that is much needed among teachers, to make up the deplorable deficiencies that are very prevalent hereabouts in the elementary principles of common school education. There is crying need of great thoroughness in elementary instruction. Teachers and parents and pupils, all seem possessed of a strange mania to advance.

The Fifth Reader and National Arithmetic are a sort of Utopia, in which the young seem to expect to bask, and be educated by the mere force of nature. Hence, we find pupils finishing the Fourth Reader because the leaves are so dog-eared they cannot use it longer, while yet they will stumble on half the words of three syllables. They are ciphering—"figuring," in the National Arithmetic, and want to take "Algebra" when they cannot tell you in half a day, how long a hen will be in laying five dozen of eggs at the rate of three in five days. Now, I wish, Mr. Secretary, that something could be done to let a little of the inflation out of these bubbles so that the primers might be studied and read till every word in them could be called at sight, and every sentence could be uttered with some sort of expression—something besides a monotone; and the mental arithmetic be studied till pupils should learn to think and reason problems out, at least such easy ones as are occurring every day in the common transactions of life. The effort in our schools now is, to try and remember explanations and rules; and the plan is, to get the whole science of these studies that depend upon the reasoning faculties, to perfection by lumbering the contents of books into the memory. Scholars are learning to parse by having a dictionary at their elbow to tell them what part of speech every word is; and mathematics is learned by doing every thing "as the rule says."

I wish, Mr. Secretary, you felt at liberty to recommend something of the nature of a State Normal School, for I do not like to see the next generation growing up into responsible life, such *intellectual drivellers* as the present working of our schools is fitted to make. From five to twenty times our pupils are *passing over* the same portion of the same study, in the vain effort to "remember what the book says," while the first shade of thought is not elicited in their minds that there is any connection between this subject and real life. There is nothing natural about this. It is like trying to secure a growth for the body by having one limb grow at a time. Every thing else suffers meanwhile. There is loss of time and waste of money. Youth passes and the advantages of it are not secured. It seems to me that every study, so far as it is attended to at all, should be pursued *exhaustively*, and then the pupil always knows just how much capital he has to depend on.

In regard to our particular town, there is an improvement in many respects. Parents are interested to attend the public examinations of teachers. At an expense of less than \$100, each, we have now two very comfortable school rooms. This with other changes that are in hand will leave us but one decidedly mean school-room in town. I think this one will be ashamed of itself in a year or two.

A. A. SMITH, Westfield.

The main difficulty lies in the system that obtains in regard to the employment of teachers. In the first place, many people are opposed to the idea that the teacher needs any professional fitting, that he should study how to, in the greatest degree, teach the greatest amount of useful information, in the most thorough manner and in the shortest space of time, as well as the mere knowledge of what to teach, and to manage the pupil so as to *certainly* secure his confidence and approbation, as to the prerequisites to successfully teaching that scholar. I am of the opinion that our schools should be taught more with reference to the future

capability of the scholar to develop his intellect and become an independent thinker, rather than a mere receptacle of abstract ideas and opinions.

As a general thing, I think too many studies are pursued at one time, and after those for which the pupil is unprepared, and cannot use to the best advantage, and that the primary branches are too apt to be neglected for something higher. When I make this statement, which is almost charging teachers with dereliction of duty in this particular, the blame is to be divided between them and the parents, while I am sure that a majority of teachers do not control this matter as it should be.

The Teachers' Institutes are certainly an advantage to all those who desire to become thoroughly acquainted with the advantages and powers of successful teaching. But they are too few and far between to accomplish all that is desirable. The Institute held here last June was, I am sure, a source of great profit to all who attended, both teachers and the people at large, by awakening some of the latest ideas *pro* and *con*, and stirring up the subject in a very marked manner. Willing to acknowledge the great power of Institutes, I am inclined to ask, do they do all that is necessary towards providing for the wants for which they are intended? Or, do we not need a system of Normal Schools either of public endowment, or instituted by private enterprise, of sufficient number to accommodate all persons in the attainment of a thoroughly complete understanding of teaching in all its variations. *

R. E. BROWN, Benson.

The elevation of our common schools, and the promotion of liberal sentiments in relation to their support and administration, are matters of equal moment to every citizen, and happily free from all considerations of an exciting, selfish and personal character. However widely men may differ in their moral views and social inclinations; however much opposed they may be in their personal attachments and cherished opinions, in their theological deductions and religious associations, on the broad and comprehensive subject of popular education, on the necessity of cultivating and improving the minds and morals of our children, a harmony of feeling and a unison of ideas, are visibly and encouragingly entertained, and a unanimity of purpose and a co-operation of action, are fully and clearly discernable.

This manifestation of regard among all classes of our citizens for the educational advancement of the young, not only indicates a high public appreciation of the benefits of our common school system, but it forms a beautiful commentary on the good sense and enlightened judgment of the people.

On such a basis as this, on such a ground work of popular confidence and respect for our laws and institutions, our hopes, as a nation, are firmly and immovably fixed. On such a foundation of general and co-operative sympathy for the moral and intellectual improvement of the masses, our rights, liberties and elective franchises, are permanently established. With such governing and controlling elements underlying and incorporated into our social, civil and domestic relations, no heartless usurpation of power, no unholy alliances, or treasonable combinations, can long successfully harm us. With such a general regard for republican principles, and such an anxious devotion to the highest interests of the country and of the commonwealth, no device of selfishness, no misguided ambition, or unscrupulous aspiration for place, or aggrandizement, can long bear sway and triumph over the lawful forces and rightful authorities of the government.

Our permanence and strength, therefore, as a free and liberty loving confederation, must and will ever depend upon the elevating influences of a wide-spread, practical intelligence among the people, and our peace and security as a sovereign power among the nations of the earth, must center in, and draw their life and stability from, the same safe and reliable foundation. The efforts of the wise and thoughtful in all parts of the country, are steadily employed in developing the

best means for promoting the cause of popular education. The interest manifested in the amount of money expended in our own state the past and previous years, for educational purposes, while they fail to compare with the labors and disbursements of many of the neighboring states for similar objects, are, nevertheless, a worthy tribute to the wisdom and intelligence of the people, and a flattering commentary on their high appreciation of scientific developments. Official returns place the expenditures of the state, the past year, for school liabilities at the very liberal sum of \$500,000.

With all this generous outlay of care and treasure for the purposes indicated, we, as a commonwealth, are far behind many of our sister states. Massachusetts, with no higher motives, and no better arguments in the premises, than we possess, has more liberally given and more freely bestowed. The State of New York, not to mention others, is also much in advance of us in her provisions for the education of her children.

As an interested member in the sisterhood of states, and as an equal sharer in the high reputation of New England for practical improvements, and for high toned moral and intellectual attainments, we are under strong and pressing obligations to raise the standard of educational reform in our own State to a proud and flattering comparison with that of any other in the Union. This, I am confident, we shall accomplish. It takes time and demands effort to work out important improvements, and it requires constant vigilance to secure great results.

The people of Vermont ought not, and must not be outdone in any matter of progress and reform, either in science or morals. We have shown by the valor and intrepidity of our arms, and have proved to the nation our firm adherence to the principles of equality and self-government. We must yet stand as high and prominent in the list of enlightened States as any member in the confederacy. Our green hills and pleasant vales inspire us to this. Our long list of venerated ancestry should stimulate us to an active interest in the moral and intellectual development of our children. Our pure mountain breezes, our health-giving valleys that infuse into our hearts a spirit of loyalty and freedom, should equally animate and encourage us in laying deep and broad the foundations of our intellectual greatness.

But before this desirable consummation can be realized, we must remove from the records of the commonwealth the solemn and humiliating fact that 107 organized districts in the State have been without schools the past year, and 21 of this number have denied the means of intellectual culture by majority votes at their annual meetings.

During the dark ages, before the light of science had fallen upon the nations, or even at later period, when witches and wizards were potent facts, and prisons and dungeons were the lot and destiny of unbelievers, we might reasonably pardon a neighborhood for refusing to sustain a common school in its midst. But in the light of the nineteenth century, in the year 1865, when the commerce of the nation floats upon every sea, and the Atlantic cable sleeps, and only sleeps, upon its ocean bed; when the electric wire stretches across the continent, and is soon destined to span the globe; when railroad lines and steamship facilities almost annihilate space, opening up a ready and convenient intercourse with all parts of the civilized world; when the press through its powerful agencies and far reaching instrumentalities, and from its ample means and abundant resources is pouring forth to the people the rich and rare literary productions of both hemispheres, and the passing events of the day are transmitted with lightning rapidity from city to city, and from ocean to ocean; in a word, when science unfolds her long-locked mysteries, and mammoth enterprises mark the age—under such circumstances of general progress and invention, it is more than humiliating to find even a *single spot* within the limits of our fond Green Mountain State, so darkened and indifferent to all that exalts man, as to refuse to its children, even for one year, the blessings and advantages of a public school. No argument can palliate such neglect, and no reasoning however logical, can possi-

bly excuse the wrong. As well might the sluggard attempt a vindication of his idleness, or the confirmed inebriate a justification of his debauchery and sin.

R. M. PHILLIPS, Castleton.

What I wish to complain of, is the great number of children throughout the State, that do not attend any school. Now, as the inhabitants of the State are compelled to support the schools, and as the expense is no more than if every child of school age attended, I think it is proper that some law be passed compelling all of school age to attend school. I cannot see that such a law would be arbitrary, not when we consider that, as the case now stands, we are compelled to pay for the support of free schools, while a great proportion of our children do not attend, and consequently grow up in ignorance and vice, for the two are inseparably connected. Many of them become inmates of our poor houses, jails, prisons, all of which we have to support.

R. V. ALLEN, Chittenden.

I believe our schools are slowly improving. The registers are better kept, though the answers of district clerks are not always correct; subjecting the superintendent to unnecessary labor, and perhaps travel to correct them, or else compelling to make returns that are partly conjectural, instead of being strictly accurate. Some of our schools have had admirable teachers, and of course the schools have been excellent ones. Other teachers have been incompetent, and their schools partial, or total failures. In one or two instances, the money paid to support a school has been worse than wasted. Nothing is so needful to improve the schools in the State, as better teachers. The Board of Education, the Superintendents, and the people generally, should work together to raise the standard of qualification in teachers—both intellectual and moral. Those teachers who attend the Institutes show more life and interest in their schools, and ordinarily are more successful.

In my report to the March meeting, I said: "The schools have been as successful the past year, as could be reasonably expected, when it is considered, that the citizens and people generally have shown so little real, hearty interest in them, and taken so poor care of them:—not so good, fellow-citizens, as you take of your cattle and sheep. Ought this to be so? Is the education of the children really of less importance than the wintering of stock? Your Superintendent desires earnestly and decidedly to express his conviction, that there ought to be a greatly increased interest in the schools, and care for them. This interest and care should be manifest.

1st. In the employment of really competent teachers of good moral character. It is impossible to have good schools without good teachers. And it should not be forgotten, that teachers influence their pupils and educate them not so much by their instructions, as by their character,—by what they are.

2nd. By securing, as far as possible, regular and punctual attendance. Even a few absences, and frequent tardinesses greatly interfere with the scholar's interest and improvement. Those that are irregular in their attendance, and frequently absent, waste their time, and profit very little by a term of school.

3rd. By visiting the schools, and feeling and manifesting a personal interest in the comfort and improvement of the scholars.

4th. By attending the public examination of teachers.

5th. By providing comfortable, neat, convenient and attractive school houses. The school house and all its surroundings are constantly exerting an educating influence upon the scholars. Whether that influence in most of our school districts, is repining and improving, or the contrary, judge ye. There is not a school house in town that is what it ought to be; and more than half of them are unfit for use.

W. T. HERRICK, Clarendon.

In regard to the matter of School Registers, Teachers' Institutes, and Annual Reports, I have only to say, that every year has only increased my estimates of their importance and value. No intelligent friend of education would dispense with them for many times their cost. The recent legislation in regard to boarding around is good so far as it goes, but it needs to be so modified as to prevent the numerous attempts that are made to evade its manifest design. Some districts vote to board around on the grand list, in others the board is disposed of at auction for a week at a time, and so every man "bids off" what he thinks will amount to his share of the tax for this purpose, and thus they contrive to keep the teacher on the move, almost as much as under the former arrangements.

Elementary instruction needs to be made vastly more thorough. It is true great improvement has been made in this direction, but there yet remains here "much land to be possessed."

In the earlier years of study in the common school, the foundation is laid for the learning of the whole after life. Habits of study are then formed which are likely to remain unchanged. If superficiality and carelessness are there induced and nurtured, no future-training is likely wholly to eradicate them. Knowledge so gained is likely to be soon entirely lost, and when the man needs to use it in the business of actual life, he is entirely unable to turn it to practical account. Please then, continue to enforce the importance of thoroughness in those who are laying the foundations of the whole intellectual character.

T. H. ARCHIBALD, Mt., Holly.

The school law in its present state is good enough, unless something could be done to bring about a more regular and full attendance. I hardly think it can be bettered for the present at least. There is a lack of interest in our schools on the part of patrons, not more than four, as I can learn, having visited any of the schools the past year. Until the people are interested in this vital subject of education, there is no law so perfect, or that can be made so perfect, as to reap the benefits which should be derived from our public schools. Parents do not see to it that their children are in school, by visiting and inspecting the registers; and hence their children are playing truant while they suppose them where they should be, at school. The law as to boarding around is good. Still many will try to evade by boarding around on the list. But teachers will not submit to this long now that they have the law and right on their side.

D. W. BROMLEY, Pawlet.

This town has had fewer poor schools the past year than usual. Teachers and scholars have seemed anxious to make themselves worthy of a good report from the Superintendent. Parents seem to manifest unusual interest in schools. They have expressed a greater desire to secure the best teachers; to improve their school houses, and in general terms, to elevate the character of the schools. We are already beginning to work in earnest. One district has entered into a contract for the erection of a new house, and others are agitating the question with commendable spirit. Committees are inquiring for first-class teachers. Each district seems determined to excel in this respect;—a state of feeling which, to my mind, bespeaks much good for the future.

C. W. BRIGHAM, Pittsfield.

I deem our school registers indispensable to the highest success of our schools. Preserved in the Town Clerk's office, they form a record which cannot fail to stimulate aspiring teachers and pupils to greater exertion, with definite instruction at the time of examination of teachers, and of visits by Superintendents, a greater uniformity and correctness might be attained. Some matters of which you inquire are almost entirely ignored. I have reason to think that the number of dismissals, and the

number of corporal punishments are not generally kept. The clerks, in some instances, give the rate per cent, instead of the amount raised upon the grand list, as required.

Teachers' Institutes cannot be too highly recommended. All who attend them acknowledge their efficiency, and the testimony of thousands who do not, cannot invalidate their authority. In addition to the incalculable benefit to the schools, they form charming episodes in the teacher's life, never to be forgotten.

An effort was made at our last Town meeting to divide two of our school districts, but the town refused, hoping that graded schools might be formed in accordance with the suggestions in one of your Annual Reports.

A party in these districts claim that the American and Irish elements cannot so unite. One of these districts contains over 100 pupils, and the other 385 pupils, of which a majority are Irish. I hope this matter will receive your attention when you visit this county.

Our Union High School is the most attractive feature of the schools in Rutland; and I wish that nationality might be no bar to the progress of educational interests.

GEO. DUTTON, Rutland.

I think the elementary branches in our schools are too much neglected—more thoroughness is needed. There seems too much of a desire on the part of scholars and teachers, to slide over the primary branches in too superficial a manner in order to get into the higher branches. This, of course, makes superficial scholars. In one district in our town, scholars from fourteen to sixteen years old wished to study Green's Analysis, Greenleaf's National Arithmetic, Rhetoric, Logic, and Algebra. Had they been permitted to do so, I think those in the primary branches might as well have stayed at home. If I understand the law rightly, our common schools are designed for the teaching of the primary branches. And I believe in having that done in the most *thorough* manner.

LYMAN H. HODGMAN, Sherburne.

I have urged upon all the teachers the great importance of spelling and arithmetic, and think much attention has been given these primary but often neglected studies.

In my report to the town I urged the importance of supplying the schools with apparatus, and commencing with a good standard dictionary. In visiting the schools, the town is so situated that I have had to travel over a hundred miles, and have really suffered from the exposure in the severe winter weather. It is no doubt due to the schools to say that the large number of instances of tardiness is to be accounted for in a great measure from the absence of any standard and uniform time.

G. S. WOODHULL, Tinmouth.

The teachers are deserving of all praise for the faithfulness and general accuracy with which they keep the registers, and fill up the blanks which they are required to fill, though it subjects them to no little labor; but the answers given by district clerks are not always as satisfactory. For instance, as nothing now seems to be depending upon the question of the number of children of school age in any district, I doubt whether the accuracy of the information given under that head can at all be depended on.

If any way can be devised to bring the annual report of the State Superintendent more before the public, or certainly before our teachers, it would be very desirable. It now goes into the hands of our district clerks, and is no more heard of. There are few teachers but would be profited by a reading of the report for 1865, and I intend to do what I can to bring it to their notice.

ALDACE WALKER, Wallingford.

Not a school in town has been visited by a prudential committee the past year, and

with exceptions in favor of two districts, not a parent's name is found recorded in a school register. Now, with teaching as with all other kinds of business, if the employer manifests little or no interest in his own business, the employee will most certainly lack an interest also—for nothing will be more sure to bring about carelessness and neglect of duty on the part of a teacher, and indolence in scholars, than the impression that no one knows whether they accomplish anything or not. A lack of interest in the several districts, is also shown by the condition of the school houses. Not a school house in town has a wood shed of any kind, and nearly all are destitute of other out-buildings, so indispensable to a school house.

S. A. FISH, West Haven.

Though much is being done to make our excellent school system efficient—yet much remains to be accomplished in order to elevate our schools to a proper standard. We must have a greater interest on the part of *citizens*—not parents sending scholars to school only—but citizens *generally*, need to take hold of this matter in earnest.

Care should be exercised in the choice of prudential committees. The want of this, results in much damage to the prosperity of many of the schools.

We ought to have some method by which our teachers can be *drilled* with special reference to their work. This should be done in every county, once a year, at least. I think that conventions, composed of town superintendents would do good. We need more *live* teachers that teach because they *love* to teach—persons that mean to make their mark, and make it well; thorough in their discipline, and rigid in their drill.

J. W. BEMIS, Barre.

In compliance with the above request, I will make a suggestion or two.

In regard to registers—there is such a lack of uniformity that it is almost impossible for the Superintendent to follow any general plan, to meet the wants of the case. Teachers do not always understand the register. Some are criminally careless—others are hardly honest. In all such cases, I think the penalty should amount to revocation of certificate, at least. If there is not sufficient knowledge to do this part of the business of a teacher, it is a great discount. If it is carelessness, the teacher's calling is too responsible a position for such a person. If it is dishonesty, the school-room is too sacred a place for such an influence.

District clerks are not uniform, and some are very deficient in their returns. In this town some neglected a part or the whole of their return. Others have not understood the different blanks to be filled. For instance, the amount paid on the grand list in the districts: In answer, some have given it in dollars and cents; others have given the *per cent.* on the list. Allow me to make a suggestion in relation to Teacher's Institutes. Would it not be practicable for the Secretary to appoint them at such time as it would be favorable to spend one or two weeks, and rally a large class of teachers for a regular *drill*? If the Secretary could not spend that amount of time, let him appoint a substitute from among the teachers to fill out the time.

ELISHA BROWN, Berlin.

That the school interests of this town have been slowly yet steadily advanced during the past year, I have reason to believe; yet the fact cannot be denied that, if the idea of continuing in the same positions those teachers who have proved themselves competent and efficient in the largest sense, should find more general application, our schools would occupy a decidedly higher vantage ground. A too frequent change of teachers has constituted the greatest hindrance to the otherwise largely increased prosperity of the common schools of this town.

I apprehend that the cause of elementary instruction can be highly subserved

only in securing the best available talent—only in employing such teachers as are known to be thoroughly practical instructors, and having secured such, to retain them as long as it is practicable.

But as it is frequently urged that it is not always practicable to secure the services of such as are competent in an enlarged sense of the term—that they are not to be obtained, I have to answer that, it is, generally speaking, impracticable *only* in a pecuniary point of view, that is, we don't sufficiently compensate such services. If this idea would form more generally a rule and guide to action on the part of prudential committees in discharge of their duty in procuring teachers, then it would be comparatively easy to perceive that the cause of practical elementary instruction would be materially and essentially advanced.

A. C. BURBANK, Cabot.

In giving my thoughts to you I feel that I cannot express myself in language sufficiently strong to speak my contempt for those who still maintain that school registers, Institutes and annual reports are a needless expense to the State; and I regret to say that a few yet remain in our would-be-called civilized town. I am proud to say that a majority of our town people have at last opened their eyes and are doing all they can for the advancement of education. Boarding around has "played out," much to the delight of teachers and all others of common sense. I fear that my report in regard to maps, globes, clocks, &c., as no school in town has either, will not prove satisfactory to you; but I am very sanguine that my next report will prove entirely so.

J. H. McLOUD, Calais.

The schools of this town have been highly successful the past year. Citizens have manifested commendable interest, and teachers in nearly every instance, proved themselves equal to their task. There has been a large increase of visitations by prudential committees and parents, and if we had fewer families whose "*cherubs*" are so extremely precious that they cannot be justly corrected without making a "row," we should have in some districts better schools.

To gratify the children, a school pic-nic was got up in which the people of the town enthusiastically participated. Thirteen pupils were each presented with a beautiful double-star banner, in testimony of their being perfect in all respects, both in studies and deportment. The result was truly pleasing to all concerned, and ultimately induced all the districts with two exceptions, to co-operate in a school festival which came off about the middle of February last, yielding a fund sufficient to furnish each of said districts with a quantity of school apparatus, among which were a globe, numeral frame, geometrical forms and arithmetic solids, a set of outline maps, a Webster new illustrated dictionary, an eight-day time-piece—all put up in a nice solid case having a secure lock. This occasion is one long to be remembered by the people of this town, and the value of its harvest to the schools can scarcely be realized.

The annual school meetings just held have been honored with more than double the usual attendance, so far as I have learned. Two new school houses have been built—and thus passes away all our old "unfit" buildings, save one.

A goodly delegation of teachers attended your Institute at Waterbury Centre, and I am happy to affirm that they profited largely by so doing.

W. DAVIS, JR., East Montpelier.

Mr. Secretary; The schools in town for the past year have been very good. Yet there has been a failing with too many of the teachers, and that is a lack of thoroughness. I found in visiting the schools, that too many teachers seemed to slide along too easy with their classes. Arithmetic, if the scholar could repeat the rules as they are in the text-book, that was enough. They do not drill the scholars in the principles of the rule. Here is the great failing; they leave the scholar too much in the

dark, whereas, if they would give a clear explanation of the principle of the rule, a greater interest would be manifest in the classes.

Reading is too much neglected. Perhaps time enough is taken, and space enough read over, and if the scholar makes no mistake in pronunciation, the teachers are generally satisfied, whether the scholar gives the sense of the author or not.

STEPHEN SPENCER, Marshfield.

Our school houses, as a general thing, are very poor, but two or three being fit for use. I think, however, that the friends of education are being aroused to a sense of their duty, and that a number of districts will doubtless build new houses the coming spring or fall. The village district is taking the lead in this matter. Here we have had an excellent school house for the last six months. A fine school house is in process of erection, and we expect to have a graded school. The house will be a fine building, a credit to the district, and an ornament to the village where it is located. I am hoping that there will be a general revolution for the better in this town the coming school year.

In making out my report I found it impossible to be very correct on account of the improper condition of the registers. In this respect a change is desirable. As it is our district clerks and teachers are very deficient.

L. C. POWERS, Moretown.

In some respects our schools have improved during the past year, as a comparison of the report with that of the previous year will show. There have been too many districts in town, and hence a number of very small schools in poor houses. Some of these have been united, and new houses are to be built. But the standard of our schools needs to be raised very much. To do this we must have more thoroughly instructed teachers—those who shall be trained especially for the work. Until we have such teachers we cannot hope for that thoroughness in elementary instruction which there should be in all our schools. Ought not our State to have a school where teachers shall be trained for our common schools? It seems to me to be a matter which demands the careful attention of all friends of education.

WM. S. HAZEN, Northfield.

The schools in town have been quite prosperous the past year, there being only two or three which might not be called first-class schools. The people here are beginning to understand that a good school is cheaper than a poor one, though they have to pay more for it.

The law which provides that the school shall be supported wholly on the grand list, in my opinion, is just; but its practical workings in this town are not all that could be desired. I think it had a tendency to shorten the terms of our schools in some instances. In two districts, if I was rightly informed by voters residing in those districts, the matter was compromised, those having scholars agreeing to board the teacher provided they should have their usual amount of school; in two districts the teacher boarded around on the grand list; and in two districts we had the usual amount of school, the teacher boarding in one place, notwithstanding

J. S. CHAMBERLIN, Plainfield.

I have tried to do my duty faithfully, thus far, as Superintendent; but have little to say for your eye or that of the State. Some of our schools have been remarkably successful; some have been failures. There must be much more agitation of questions pertaining to school matters before they receive the attention they deserve. There is great necessity for your preaching to parents. You may think that you have said enough; but it is not often that you speak to the same audience. Of course the rest of us have work in the same direction. The patrons of our schools are wonderfully ignorant of, or are well nigh asleep to, one of the highest interests of our com-

munities. I do not think that there are more than two persons in a district on an average, that show anything like a proper interest or activity in respect to our common schools. I think, too, though I hope I am mistaken, that the major part of the talk upon the subject of the schools is in the way of unfavorable comments upon the methods and acts of teachers, the tendency of which is to discourage teachers rather than to encourage them.

There is another thought that has been upon my mind of late. How few really excellent teachers there are. There are few that feel *at home* in teaching. They have not thought carefully of the comparative merits of this or that method of instruction; they have not studied the philosophy of teaching, nor the subjects with whom they have to deal. They take up teaching because they know how to read write, cipher and parse, and have little else to do at certain seasons, or they engage in the work because it is lighter employment—as they think—than *house-work* or other kinds of labor, physical and mental. There is no love for it; no independence in their manner of work; and they ask the questions and go through the routine of school duties formally and heartlessly. When will a *universal interest* in schools on the part of our citizens, and such *remuneration* of teachers' services as will enable them to put their heart, mind and soul in the work, secure to us the class of instructors so much needed and desired? Meanwhile in view and hope of this educational millennium, we must cheerfully labor on in the good work.

School registers and annual reports are very valuable, and Teachers' Institutes indispensable.

A. B. DASCOMB, Waitsfield.

As you solicit remarks, I will say the greatest failure in our schools has been a lack for governing them properly. I have revoked certificates in two instances where the teachers have failed on this point. I think that in order to have better schools we ought to have a more thorough system of elementary instruction. We find in most of our schools an eagerness on the part of the scholars to be in the highest class when not at all fitted for it. I am not wise enough to suggest any remedy for this evil.

I have done what I could at my examinations of schools to make the teachers learn the scholars one thing at a time perfectly before taking any thing else; but have found by reviewing studies gone through with, that the aim of the majority is—I will have my classes as far advanced as they are in other schools, and for this reason scholars will study arithmetic as long as they attend school and then be ignorant of the first principles of the study. Knowing this to be a fact, I think Superintendents should have sufficient pay for their services to enable them to attend more to the examinations and reviewing of our schools.

Our school registers have been well kept and filled out by the teachers; but district clerks, in almost every instance, have, through ignorance of the business, made returns that are very faulty, and consequently my answers to questions are not so clear as I would like to have them.

The system of boarding in one place works well, and is a decided improvement on the old way.

The Teachers' Institutes have a good influence, and we ought to have more of them.

I like the annual reports and think they are beneficial.

S. C. TUCKER, Warren.

There is no logic like the logic of facts. In regard to schools as in regard to every other great interest, facts must constitute the solid ground for every sure step in advance. In collecting these facts the registers are indispensable. The registers in this town are generally well kept, and the main items are entirely reliable. But the facts collected need a much wider circulation than they now find. Your annual report is too voluminous to find its way generally to the

households of the State—too voluminous to be generally read if it should. An abstract, presenting in a clear and concise form the important facts should be published in all the papers in the State. In that way they would reach every person and household interested. If the public are to be moved by the facts, the facts must be publicly disseminated.

Teachers Institutes, while they unquestionably do much good in the communication of new and important ideas of teaching, and in awakening a deeper interest in the work, are quite too brief and occur quite too seldom in any one community to produce large and lasting effects. Teachers need the most thorough and careful drilling for their work. This work is the nicest and most delicate to which human hands are put. That they may do it, not clumsily and badly, but skillfully and well—do it so, certainly and always—they need the most careful training—training by the best masters of the work. Lectures, the most pertinent and stirring will not do this. Nothing, in my judgment, but a normal school will meet the want and furnish the State with such teachers as it needs. The great want of the State over is a supply of well trained and skillful teachers. Put such into all our schools, and nearly all else that we need would speedily be supplied. It seems to me the thing to be aimed at, and that in regard to which the public mind should be agitated and informed, is a State Normal School. With that fairly inaugurated I should have the highest hopes for the schools of the State.

This closes my tenth year of continuous service as Superintendent of Schools for this town, and with this report my labors in this department will cease. Next to the teachers of the State, the town superintendents are the most important, and if competent and efficient, the most powerful agents in the economy of our schools. The Secretary of the Board can visit very few schools and become intimately acquainted with very few teachers, but the superintendents have the schools of their several towns constantly under their eye. They may not only guard them from incompetent teachers, but it is their duty to see how these teachers do their work, and in the freest way make such suggestions and give such instructions as are needed. The superintendent may put himself in contact with every teacher and school in town, and in some measure impart his own life to them. If competent and faithful he may do a work of inestimable value. But the work must be one, mainly, of love. The reward must be found mainly in the consciousness of the importance of the work, and of duties done. Pecuniarily the compensation is beggarly. If a team is hired the superintendent runs in debt every day he works. No amount of diligence will remedy it. It is quite too much to expect men with their hands full of their own work, to take this upon themselves as a gratuity, and do it for many years. The legislative permission to towns to grant additional pay, may in some places, furnish relief, but it will not be general and effective. The legislature by positive enactment must provide the remedy, or it will not be had. Time and patience will doubtless do the work here, as they have so effectually in other matters.

C. C. PARKER, Waterbury.

Again the Superintendents of the Common Schools of Vermont are called upon to make their reports of items taken from school registers, and such other questions as may have occupied their minds and attention while in discharge of their duties.

The interest, we must confess, has been excited mostly by Teachers' Institutes, and the Secretary's Annual Reports. We are compelled to see that teachers are better qualified, and that every point under our immediate control is conforming to the advancing condition of our recently distracted country.

In the past year the schools of this town have been to a good degree successful and prosperous. Our committees have secured, as far as possible, the services of thorough and competent teachers; and as a result, all but three out of twenty-four terms, have been quite profitable, and most of them in advance of terms in previous years.

A. P. TOWN, Woodbury.

We have eleven districts. I have made thirty-four visits in the schools. It is not easy to give an exact representation of the state of the schools—one that shall do them entire justice and be perfectly acceptable to all concerned. To me it seems not judicious, or wise, to be as specific and personal as some superintendents are, in their annual reports. Such is the state of feeling in many cases, that to speak plainly and pointed, in public, of the faults of heads of families, would only create bitterness and cause more difficulty than it would obviate. What might be said in a public report, might have a discouraging effect upon the teachers of whom it was said, if called by name. Many need words of encouragement rather than of complaint. While I would not say that in No. 1, or 2, the teacher has failed in government, or in critical, accurate teaching, I would not hesitate to say that these defects have both been found. The teachers have not all been what they should be. There have been faults on the part of scholars. Not all have been properly dutiful, respectful and studious. The registers show great irregularity in attendance. I think a careful examination would show that a large number have been absent more days than they have been present. The evils of such irregularity are very great, and, if possible should be remedied. Tardiness is another great evil. There is nothing like promptness and regularity. A long row of tardy marks shows the character of the boy, and tell you what the man will be—"a little too late." We have had faithful and successful teachers the past year. They have deserved and gained credit.

One suggestion may, I think, with propriety be made to prudential committees. I think young and inexperienced teachers should not be put into the larger schools. I would say the same to young teachers, who are about to embark upon the untold enterprise. Search out a small school where every thing promises quiet and success. Your success will give you power for future use.

B. F. FOSTER, Dummerston.

I think that the people of this town are pretty thoroughly convinced of the importance of bestowing more attention to school interests. Much too long have we contented ourselves by plodding along in the beaten path of former years, making but little positive progress. I feel that we are emerging from this state of indifference to a clearer perception and knowledge of the relation which this subject really holds, not only to individual prosperity, but to a nation's welfare. The right culture and education of the young generally, was never, to my mind more forcibly evident than at this present moment. We need the provisions which the State has made to furnish a more beneficent, active and thorough system of education. We need here, more fully to avail ourselves of the provisions of the law that we may unite our interests and strengthen our capacities for more intelligent and systematic effort. There is a deep feeling of anxiety awakened in the minds of the thoughtful in this town, relative to the "consolidation" of districts, and establishing a "Central Graded High School." The subject is publicly agitated from week to week, and some more definite action is soon to be had.

In relation to elementary instruction, I am quite sure it is not sufficiently thorough. Orthography and reading are of the first importance to every scholar. Principles should be taught with every exercise in spelling or reading, until they can be applied with certainty and success. Defining the meaning of words is not made a study in our schools, as it should be. A good standard dictionary should be in the possession of every school district for the benefit of the whole school; and each scholar should own sufficient helps for all ordinary purposes. Geography, History, English Grammar and Composition, as well as all arithmetical studies, should be taught by requiring first a thorough mastery of "first principles." In fact, precision and thoroughness are indispensable to success, in every department of learning.

SAMUEL PHELPS, Grafton.

I am sorry to say, however, that a very few have not kept the registers as perfectly as they should have done. So much depends upon full and accurate statistics as a basis for proper suggestions and right action, that it should be regarded as among the most important duties of a school teacher to carefully keep the registers, and see that every item be correctly reported. Teaching, with those who engage in it, should be made a primary, not a secondary, object. What more responsible position can any one occupy? Every necessary qualification should be secured; enthusiastic devotion should be given to the work, and all the duties of the vocation faithfully discharged.

The utility of Teachers' Institutes and the value of annual reports are no longer matters of doubtful propriety; each in its place is of the greatest value. The active teacher will secure the advantage of a Teachers' Institute if practicable. The attendance of the teachers in this town on such Institutes has not been as general as desirable; this, however, has been owing, at least, in part, to their remoteness. The annual reports embody a mass of information which ought to be in the hands of all.

The elementary or primary principles of every science should be most thoroughly taught. Without a clear understanding of, and perfect familiarity with, those principles, little progress can be made. The pupil may be hurried over page after page, but to little purpose. The living teacher should so comprehend, illustrate and enforce those principles upon the pupil's mind as to make a lasting impression, that they may be ever at hand to be applied, as occasion may require.

HUBBARD EASTMAN, Guilford.

I am sorry to have to answer the questions you require of me, for by the answers, you must see that our town has taken but little interest in the cause of education. Not a dictionary, globe, outline map, nor any apparatus in any school in town. In fact so indifferent has the town been that there has been no report from the town superintendent until the last year for a number of years; and I am glad to know that quite an interest was manifested in the report this year. And although I felt called to speak quite plainly in regard to the negligence and indifference, and its results as affecting our schools, it was well received; and I hope an interest has been excited which will result in good to them.

L. M. WOODARD, Halifax.

It is evident that correct statistical information is the only guide to sound legislation, consequently I regard the registers as indispensably necessary. I notice one deficiency—there is no inquiry as to the number of families in the fractional districts. It is therefore left to conjecture in forming the aggregate for the town.

As to Teachers' Institutes, it is hardly possible to overestimate their value. The term should be at least one week, instead of two days as now. Conversing with teachers has convinced me that by means of the instruction gained at Institutes their views of school teaching were greatly enlarged, and a practical working, inspiring power imparted to them unknown before. My own experience and an extended observation convince me of the truthfulness of these remarks and lead to the belief that legislation ought to provide more amply for the Teachers' Institute.

Having answered the printed inquiries, I will offer a few suggestions relative to other topics intimately connected with the educational interest of the State. One good step has already been taken in placing the educational affairs of the State in the hands of a Board set apart for the purpose. As akin to this and necessary to perfect the arrangement, the school interest of each town should be made a unit; all the school property owned by the town, instead of the districts as now; and persons annually appointed by the town to inspect the places of public instruction—the surroundings as well as the houses themselves, and the

internal arrangement. Furthermore, in my judgment, legislation ought to provide for apparatus, books of reference, etc., by partially defraying the expenses to those towns that would introduce them.

R. L. ESTABROOK, Jamaica.

I am satisfied that there has been some improvement in the condition of our schools the past year. There has been more interest manifest on the part of the citizens, and there is an increasing desire for thoroughly competent teachers. I look upon this as encouraging, and hope the time will soon come when no others can find place in any of our schools. I think it erroneous to suppose that a poorly educated teacher will do just as well for a backward school. It is my opinion that it is a sure way to forever keep it in the backward condition. One of the most common evils connected with our schools is, that prudential committees, too, hire teachers whose price suits, without any regard as to whether they possess the requisite qualifications, or are suitably adapted to successfully perform the duties of a teacher. When will the people of Vermont learn to exercise the same sagacity in regard to their schools, as in their own private affairs, and, that it is very poor economy to hire cheap teachers and have cheap schools?

You solicit remarks in regard to Teachers' Institutes. Would that they were more generally attended, and then I think they would be better appreciated. We feel greatly obliged for the one holden in town last summer, and sincerely wish that we could be thus favored every year. I have yet to find one who has attended any of them who is not fully convinced of their importance and utility.

R. M. PRATT, Newfane.

I think that teachers generally manifest a greater interest in the work of preparation than heretofore. This I attribute in no unimportant measure to the influence exerted by Teachers' Institutes. I believe also, teachers are more efficient in their labors in schools, in consequence of the requirements concerning the registers—the true character of a school being generally indicated by them. They serve as a check, moreover, upon improprieties of department on the part of pupils. The practice of boarding around was discontinued in this town, as it should be universally, a long time since.

The importance of greater thoroughness in elementary instruction, is generally admitted. It is getting to be well understood that a little, thoroughly mastered, is far better than a vast amount of undigested material forced upon the mind only to confuse it. As far as my observation extends, I think the neglect of reading in our common schools is greater than of any other branch of education. Its comparative importance must be greatly underrated. A thorough drilling of teachers on this subject is needed. A State Normal School would remedy many defects in teaching. We should in a very few years have an entirely different class of teachers, not that we have not already many very good ones, but the methods of instruction with all, would be greatly improved. And why need Vermont be behind other States in this important particular? I believe we have a school system, which if properly appreciated will tell powerfully on the character of the people in the future.

JAMES CRAWFORD, Putney.

Our schools are far from what they ought to be. There is a great lack of interest, I think, on the part of parents and guardians. Only two of the prudential committee have taken the interest and pains to visit the common schools in town the past year. If they had hired a man to train a valuable colt, would they not have taken a more lively interest in the matter?

M. A. KNOWLTON, Stratton.

We have had some superior schools in town the past year, and they have had a good influence not only in the district where they were kept, but in neighboring dis-

tricts. We have also had before us an example of a very poor school; a recurrence of which, I trust our people will strive to avoid. In one district a neat globe has been procured, and a vote taken to build a school house; and in another, money has been raised with which to purchase outline maps. The percentage of attendance is increasing, and tardiness is diminishing. So, on the whole, the signs of the times are encouraging.

Registers and Annual Reports cannot well be dispensed with; and Teachers' Institutes should be multiplied. Let us demand a higher grade of qualifications in our teachers, and employ every possible means for the improvement of our schools.

E. O. LEE, Vernon.

Some complain of the whole system, and denounce all compulsory laws upon this subject. The superintendent is incompetent, the prudential committee is remiss, the teacher is partial, the whole thing is a petty tyranny, and such complaints come generally, from such as never enter the school room, never encourage the teacher, or see that their children are on the line at the moment, and ready to receive instruction and set good examples and thus further the interests involved.

But we have reason to be thankful that it is not so with all. There are those who feel that duty requires their personal attention to this subject, and who, without expectation of pecuniary reward, will spend their time and money, if need be, for the benefit of the rising generation.

If something could be done to induce a more general interest in the community—more diligence in Superintendents and committees; and withal better qualifications in teachers, then the scholars would view it as a serious matter, in which their own personal interest was involved, and the whole subject would assume a different aspect. To this end I suppose the Board of Education is now engaged, and unquestionably they are in doubt what new advances can be profitably ventured upon. The people must be educated up to the point of duty, before law can do the work. Perhaps no radical change would now be best, and yet, in some respects, such change is necessary. For instance, it would not probably meet with general approval so to enlarge the duties and powers of superintendents that they should furnish all the teachers of the public schools and dismiss them when found incompetent, or unprofitable; and yet I see many advantages that would be likely to result from such an arrangement. To do this the superintendent should be paid for his time, and double the time allowed him that the law contemplates. It may be too soon, but to something like this it will come at last. It is not to be supposed that every man is as competent to perform these duties as are properly selected for the necessary qualifications. Such a one would bring into the work, talent, assiduity, executive ability and integrity, which would only bend to the general interests of the great cause in which he was engaged.

There is a pecuniary interest at stake which should awaken the public mind to its importance, were only dollars and cents concerned. In a rough estimate, perhaps \$200,000, are, in one way and another invested in the public school enterprise, annually. I mean the common schools in this State; and this, to my mind, is a small item, when compared with the precious time and waning opportunities of those who are soon to assume the responsibilities of the men and women of to-day,—their opportunities wasted or but partially improved, will tell on the future of Vermont. Give them the golden facilities and see to it that they embrace and improve them, and Vermont will show that she has genius and talent to elevate her to a proud eminence in the galaxy of New England and America.

HOSEA F. BALLOU, Wilmington.

To the School Registers, Teachers' Institutes and Annual Reports, may safely be attributed a great share of the modern improvements in our schools. Indeed, this fact is too generally recognized to require lengthy comment.

In one district in this town a teacher boarded around, which proves that legislation has not entirely eradicated the evil. Thoroughness in elementary instruction is of

the first importance, and teachers in this respect are most deplorably deficient, although the teachers of this town were quite equal to the average, none of them were fully competent to instruct in the elements of all the required branches.

J. HILAND DODGE, Andover.

I think I can see the influence of Teachers' Institutes in the improved methods of instruction of those who attend them. They seem to comprehend better the truism, that it is *quality* rather than *quantity* that should be attained in education. They seem to aim to make their pupils comprehend and master what they go over. Teachers should be made to feel the importance of laying the foundation of education sure and well in the young mind. In order to do this pupils must be made familiar with first principles so they may be ready to apply them at every step of their future progress. In too many of our schools but one faculty is cultivated—memory—and thus the child's perception and reasoning faculties remain dormant until they are called out by accident in the business of active life. If the scholar is to be made to understand how every lesson had a relation to something else—like a step in a flight of stairs—he would make greater progress and it would lighten many a dull hour of study. Our teachers too frequently give too long and hard lessons. They should be short and well committed, and should be made by the teacher clear by familiar illustrations.

No one at all conversant with the operations of our present system of school laws, can doubt that it has done a great and good work. But Mr. Secretary, do you dream that it is perfected? Are not they prepared to receive some changes? Do you not think it would be better to have a Board of Education in every town, whose duty shall comprehend the present superintendents' and the prudential committees'—at least so much of it as relates to the hiring of teachers? If you think favorably of this change, will you not recommend it to the attention of the legislature the present year.

S. A. PARKER, Bethel.

I cannot too highly speak of the Annual Reports. Could they be more generally distributed their influence would be invaluable.

The effect of the Institute was very perceptible. The teachers who attended express themselves in respect to it in the highest terms.

I am deeply impressed with the need of an enactment requiring the attendance of scholars, between certain ages, for a stated portion of each year, especially in villages. It seems to me one of the greatest defects, if not the greatest, is a lack of thoroughness in elementary instruction. It is neither perceived by most of our teachers, nor by those interested in our schools.

S. F. BROWN, Cavendish.

The experience of the past year has convinced me, that the securing a good school rests more with the committee than with any other individual. A superintendent may examine an applicant and form a very correct opinion of the mere knowledge she has acquired, but he cannot tell beforehand whether that individual has a love for teaching, an ability to govern, a magnetic power to inspire her scholars, which alone can render her school a success. I have in mind two young ladies who passed the very poorest examinations of any this past year. Indeed their examinations were such failures, I hesitated whether to give them certificates or not, and yet owing to *their love for teaching*—they have splendid schools—far superior to some who had passed almost faultless examinations. A superintendent cannot always predict the success of an applicant; but there are always teachers to be had, who by their past experience and success, have proved themselves to be good teachers, and if committees will take pains to secure such, the probabilities are, their schools will be good. *The success of the schools depends mainly upon the committees.* Too great stress cannot be laid upon the secur-

ing good teachers. The difference between \$60, and \$65, to a whole district, is but a trifle. And yet that trifle may be just the difference between a very poor school breaking up in a row, and a very good school doing great good.

GEO. H. WHITE, Chester.

We still fail to see as we ought that money is well invested which secures, even for the most obscure locality, the best instructors and disciplinarians that can be found. As a consequence teachers do not have what they should have for thorough qualification for the work. My experience among the schools for the year has impressed me as I have never been impressed before with the value of parental co-operation in giving character to the school. With this the pages of the school register need be little defaced with black marks, and the teacher need have little occasion for governing the school. Without this, the teacher has rare qualifications who can render the school a thoroughly successful one. The indifference of parents with respect to personal knowledge of the character of the schools may not be so great as it seems to be, but that the name of a parent upon the school registers, as a visitor, is such a rare sight, certainly has a bad look. In my opinion the majority of visitors' names upon the page of the register appropriated for that purpose, are the names of those who visit the teacher, rather than the school.

A great advance has been made in the matter of the need of furnishing school houses with a view to the physical comfort of scholars. A corresponding advance is needed in appreciating the need of aids to their mental improvement.

Concerning the value of Teachers' Institutes, School Registers, etc., I need say but little. Their good fruit is visible.

CHAS. W. CLARK, Hartland.

There has been very little change in our schools for the past four or five years—none I think for the worse. The scholars that attend are younger by two or three years, on an average, than they were five years ago. In fact very few of either sex have attended the district schools that were above sixteen; and probably nine-tenths were under fourteen.

The winter schools taught by male teachers, have, with one exception, been of a higher character than those taught by females. One overgrown, unmanageable semi-barbarian of a boy in school, is enough to tax a female teacher to death, and destroy her influence and her usefulness. A great many young ladies succeed very well in teaching young children, who have not the tact and force of character necessary to manage large unruly boys. There is nothing that has so salutary an effect upon such boys, as for them to know that they have a *master*, who has both the ability and the disposition to give them a good flogging if he thinks they need it.

MOSES BURBANK, Ludlow.

I read the last Annual Report with much interest and profit. I believe that if they were read more generally they would awaken a deeper interest and lead to more earnest efforts in behalf of district schools and the general cause of education throughout the State. I heartily approve of the act placing the whole support of schools upon the grand list. The benefits derived from our common schools extend to all, and it cannot appear otherwise than reasonable and just, that every recipient should contribute for the support. I assure you that the act is, and will continue to be, favorably considered, not only by the people of this town, but throughout the State, so long as it allows them to pay their taxes in bread and butter, and compel teachers to seek it when and where they can. So far as I can learn this law has made little or no change in regard to the custom of "boarding around." The interests and convenience of districts are invariably consulted before that of teachers. Nothing, in my opinion, but a rigid enactment, aimed directly at this relic of the good old days of past generations, will fully

abolish it. If left wholly to the philanthropic, generous hearts of heavy tax payers, I apprehend that teachers will be obliged to travel for some time to come.

The great trouble is, we do not realize the full value and importance of our common schools. Universal intelligence, should now, if never before, be our watchword; and to secure it we should not spare labor nor cost. In it we find our surest guaranties for the safety and preservation of our cherished institutions—the only safe guard against immorality, fanaticism, treason, and rebellion, and we shall realize the full benefits of free government and republican institutions only so far as we elevate and educate the masses. It is one of the essential if not the only condition, of the highest civilization, and *as such* it is obligatory upon the State to provide means by which it can be obtained. But all who labor in the cause of education are painfully aware that the State, however liberal in other respects, treats our educational interests as a matter of small importance, and wholly unworthy of its favorable consideration and provision. We have no good reason to expect that the people throughout our school districts and the State, will shake off their indifference, and make any liberal provision for the care and support of common schools, until our legislature shall first make some move in this direction, and seemingly, if not in fact, attach some importance to this subject. Our common schools are the nursery of all our higher institutions of learning, the very *basis* of general intelligence. All true civilization and general liberty. In them most of our students receive their first impressions, from their first habits of study, and the first principles of life. In short, here they lay the basis of their character, the foundation upon which they are to build during their future lives. If we could fully realize the importance of such a work, it would be sufficient to incite us to all necessary effort. We are apt to appreciate our blessings in proportion to their cost; and the chief reason why we think so little and care so little about our district schools, is because they cost us so little; and so long as we withhold our efforts and means in their behalf, we shall care less about them until they shall become wholly neglected and worthless.

E. F. BULLARD, Royalton.

In remarking upon the condition of common schools in this place, I would say that they are not all that could be desired, or ought to be by the community. Neither are they what the law of the State designed they should become, and would be, if parents and guardians viewed the subject in its true light, and felt a deeper interest in the cause of education, and the true welfare of the rising generation, or if the school committees did their duty faithfully and took more pains in the selection of teachers. Some of them look at the price, more than the quality of the article. Cheapness, or favoritism, is the rule that appears to govern them. Young and inexperienced teachers who look at the pay more than the improvement of the pupils, are frequently employed as instructors to the detriment of our children. In one district the past winter they hired a young man, or rather a boy, who kept for twelve dollars a month and boarded himself. The result was, the school dwindled, and he had no scholars to instruct for days, if not for weeks, before the term closed.

P. CLARK, Sharon.

The beneficial results of Teachers' Institutes are duly appreciated by the teachers and citizens of this town, as was evinced by the large delegation from this place, who attended at Proctorsville last summer. I have heard but one opinion expressed by those familiar with the manner in which they are conducted, and that is decidedly in their favor. No teacher, however good, can fail of improvement while attending one; and the inexperienced will receive much valuable information in regard to their vocation which they could hardly learn by experience in many terms of teaching.

The legislation in reference to boarding around is favorably received by most districts. In some, they set the board up at auction two or more weeks at a time, and bid it down, thus sending the teacher around the district.

J. R. WALKER, Springfield.

But we have been favored with a few good schools, some as good as could be expected, and some poor. Where we can have twenty or thirty scholars there is no difficulty in having good schools; but where there are only six to twelve scholars, it is next to impossible to have a first class school. There should be some emulation among scholars, some enthusiasm awakened by what one or more have done. But this can be looked for only where a considerable number are convened from day to day. Until our scholars are increased greatly numerically the schools will average as they do now. I have endeavored to unite districts as far as possible, and have the prospect that by another year, two, perhaps three, of the districts will be absorbed by others. It is difficult to do it by the physical geography of this region. We have high hills, deep valleys, drifted roads in winter, and tedious at almost any season, but the work will go slowly on. Better houses will be furnished. Our great house for the Union district at Gaysville, and the elegant model of a house in district No. 6, will not be without their influence. Other districts will see and will copy. We agree that it is desirable to give scholars a good education, and I think a large majority of our inhabitants would sustain a law making it compulsory on all parents to send all children of ordinary minds to school as much as six months in a year till twelve years of age, and at least three months till fifteen years old. We have inhabitants who are poor, who will keep children in the mills when they ought to go to school, and I hope some law will be enacted that will reach that case.

T. S. HUBBARD, Stockbridge.

The condition of the schools the past year in Weathersfield, if viewed in comparison with former years, has been highly prosperous. The majority of the teachers have been well qualified and well adapted to the instruction of the young. In most instances they have evinced an interest in their work, and have been supported by parents and guardians. No open rebellions have occurred, nor bold defiance of authority, as is too often the case. In short, harmony and improvement have been the rule, and discord and its results the exception. If, however, you ask me, are the people aware of the importance of public schools and sufficiently interested in their success, or, are our schools what they ought to be,--the painful answer must be emphatically in the negative. The inhabitants are not truly alive to this great interest, nor do they bring to school affairs the same shrewdness and common sense which they exhibit in other business. To arouse them from this apathy and create within them a deep and abiding interest in the public schools, is the great work to be accomplished. When this is done, there will be little trouble with schools. Complaint, faultfinding, incompetent teachers, and unruly, vicious children, will be superseded by commendation, just praise, competent teachers, and orderly, intelligent, merry-hearted boys and girls. The means now used—Teachers' Institutes, Annual Reports, and School Registers—are well calculated to produce these results. The latter, also, if rightly used, will greatly aid teachers in the management and discipline of their schools.

The recent action of the legislature on the question of boarding around, cannot be regarded by an intelligent mind, otherwise than as an omen of good, and an advanced step. There is, however, a custom, almost if not quite as pernicious in its influence. I refer to the practice of giving the board to the lowest bidder, thus often subjecting the teacher to the inconvenience of several boarding places and some of them not always the best the district affords. The practice ought to be discarded by an enlightened public sentiment.

C. F. ALDRICH, Weathersfield.

I am happy to be able to say that there are gratifying evidences in our community of an increased and growing appreciation of the great importance of our public school system to the highest interests of the family and the social and political prosperity of the State. Yet the awakening of the public mind to the many deficiencies in the character of our schools and methods of instruction, is obviously the first step in the line of that improvement and progress so much needed; and there certainly can be no doubt of the efficient instrumentality of Teachers' Institutes and the other educational provisions of our school laws in securing that object.

The legislature has as yet taken no steps in advance of public opinion in this section, and the provisions and requirements of all its enactments are successfully observed. The recent enactment relative to boarding the teacher upon the scholar, however, has not, as you will perceive, materially affected the practice of boarding around in this town, as it has not been the practice of any of our districts to defray any part of the expenses of the schools by any other method than a tax upon the grand list, but the practice of a number of our districts of requiring the teacher to board with all the tax payers in the district, is little or no better in its effect. The better way is to leave the matter of the teacher's board with the prudential committee, who will find it less difficult to secure the services of a good teacher, if he can offer him good boarding accommodations, than otherwise.

The subject of greater thoroughness in elementary instruction, is one of great importance, and cannot well be discussed in these limits. It will be brought about in our schools by time and the dissemination of correct views of what truly constitutes intellectual harmony and discipline.

J. C. FENN, Weston.

The schools have been well conducted by able and experienced teachers. But I am sorry to see so little interest manifested by parents and prudential committees.

WM. H. ROLPH, West Windsor.

Our schools have enjoyed a good degree of prosperity during the past year, only two, as far as I have been able to detect, requiring severe criticism, and the failure in both these instances was in governing the schools.

The registers were generally well kept by teachers, although a majority neglect filling out the column of "deportment;" and yet they certify to the correctness of the same at the bottom of the page. I think this column a very important one, and every scholar should understand that his rank in deportment will be made history in its appropriate column.

Our district clerks are becoming better acquainted with their duties in regard to the register, and in almost every instance, the desired information is obtained in answer to the various questions.

As regards "boarding around," I find in our town that a large number of those districts which have heretofore boarded their teacher on the scholar, now compel them to board around on the grand list, which, instead of improving the matter, makes a serious business of boarding.

Most of these are our back districts, where the roads are hilly, and distances anything but encouraging. If this is to be the condition of things, I would be glad to have the legislature legally invite all such districts to board their teacher at one place. By this means, I think we should be able to secure the services of more competent teachers, and at less expense than at present.

O. W. SHERWIN, Woodstock.

Such is the report in regard to the condition of the schools, and of the public sentiment in reference to them for the past school year. As usual I have selected from the official returns of the Town Superintendents such portions as, together, would give the fairest general view of the schools, and have been, of course, constrained to omit much that would have been entertaining and valuable.

I now subjoin the Statistical Aggregate, and take pleasure in saying, that, although not in all respects perfectly reliable, it is more nearly accurate than ever before.

STATISTICAL AGGREGATE FOR 1865 AND 1866.

Number of heads of families.....	58,534
“ “ children between the ages of 4 and 18.....	88,772
“ “ weeks of school taught by males.....	9,391
“ “ “ “ “ “ females.....	54,340
Amount of wages paid male teachers.....	\$59,289
“ “ “ female “.....	\$143,263
“ paid for board of teachers.....	\$131,763
“ “ “ fuel, furniture and incidentals.....	\$47,565
“ “ “ erecting school houses.....	\$22,838
“ “ “ repairing “ “ \$.....	\$16,723
“ of Public Money distributed in 1865.....	\$109,512
“ raised on grand list.....	\$240,942
“ “ on the scholar.....	\$600,000
“ paid for wages, board, and fuel.....	\$365,943
Number of weeks of school supported by tax.....	30,004
Average number of voters attending school meeting.....	13
Number of Registers required.....	2,966
“ “ different teachers employed.....	4,721
“ “ private and select schools.....	228
“ attending private and select schools.....	6,004
Aggregate average attendance of scholars between 4 and 20.....	44,922
Whole No. of scholars between 4 and 18 attending school,	69,708
“ “ “ “ “ 18 and 20 “ “.....	2,580
“ “ “ instances of tardiness.....	627,941
“ “ “ “ “ dismissal.....	84,481
Number of scholars having no absences.....	8,406
“ “ instances of corporal punishment.....	6,947
“ “ visits by Superintendents.....	5,557
“ “ “ “ Prudential Committees.....	2,353
“ “ “ “ others.....	39,829
“ “ scholars studying Reading.....	63,769
“ “ “ “ Spelling.....	62,218
“ “ “ “ Penmanship.....	30,291

Such is the summary of the statistics as returned in the Registers, and it is worthy of close attention. It will be found, on inspection of the extracts from the returns of the Town Superintendents, and the same will be manifest on examining the Registers on file in the offices of the various town clerks, that while there is perceptible a decided improvement in the character of the statistical returns of the teachers, there is good ground for complaint of the manner in which most of the district clerks have performed their duties under the law, in making their statistical reports. While many of the returns of the district clerks are well and carefully made, and are manifestly reliable and valuable, there are very many that bear upon their face evidence of the carelessness and, sometimes, untruthfulness of their authors.

The importance of care and accuracy in making the statistical returns has been very often the subject of comment in the annual reports, but the subject is of so much consequence that it still deserves to be brought to the attention of all.

It is not alone, that as a matter of curiosity and of pleasant investigation, the accuracy of our educational statistics becomes of moment, but always and everywhere, accurate statistical knowledge is the safest basis of sound legislation; and this, however true of any other subject, is still more true of the working of a State

school system. The current multiplicity of educational theories is the ever-present bane of all legislation about schools, and the only safeguard is to be found in a thorough knowledge of all facts concerning the actual working of existing school systems. And this is more true of the people of our State than of any other people. The people of Vermont may be said to be more than usually suspicious of, and opposed to, all mere theoretical legislation in general, and particularly so in regard to such legislation as is necessary to provide the means of education for all. While both ready and willing to do all that the improvement of our schools requires, the natural conservatism of the State leads our people to be inclined to refuse all legislation that will change the character of the existing school system, until convinced that such legislation is necessary, by the actual failure of the system to do well its proper work under existing laws.

Facts, then, are what we want—in regard to the actual working of our system of schools, and these must be furnished, and in such form as to be entirely reliable, or the advancement of our schools and their steady improvement will be retarded. All who wish that our schools should, in their improvement, keep pace with the other important interests of society, should unite in the formation of a public opinion that shall not only demand but enforce a more thorough and faithful discharge of the duties devolved by law upon the district clerks in the collection of statistics in reference to schools.

The prevalent custom of appointing to the office of district clerk some young, inexperienced and irresponsible boy who does not, and cannot, realize the possible importance of the official duties he is called to perform, should be entirely abolished; and an older and more responsible class of men appointed to the office. And this becomes more apparent when we reflect that not only is it true that our whole system of educational statistics is vitiated and made inoperative in its full power, by the careless manner in which the duties of district clerk are too often performed; but it is also true that four-fifths of the litigation that ever prevails in regard to school matters, the most useless and most injurious litigation that is known, is caused by the inexperience, want of knowledge, and carelessness of district clerks.

We need a thorough agitation, by conversation and discussion, of the public mind, so that faithfulness on the part of all concerned, in the collection and return of school statistics shall be *universally demanded*.

NUMBER OF FAMILIES AND OF CHILDREN.

The number of heads of families in the State, as reported in the Registers, is 58,534, and the whole number of children between four

and eighteen years is 88,772. There are various suggestive thoughts connected with these facts, of general as well as of educational importance. The injury inflicted upon Vermont in many of her highest interests by the immense and disproportionate emigration of her citizens to other States and Territories, has often been the subject of comment; and attention has been asked to the fact, that the portion of our population thus lost to the State, consists mainly of the sound, enterprising and vigorous, and on that account constitutes a greater injury than is indicated by the mere number that thus leave us. And the statistics of the last year afford a forcible commentary in support of that view. It is shown that here in a State that is, compared with the Eastern States, yet young, we have but a small fraction over one and one-half as indicating the ratio between the children and the families of the State. It may be doubted whether a population of 315,000, can be found anywhere else on the globe having less than 89,000 children between the ages of four and eighteen years. Little consideration is required to perceive how sadly this fact portends of the future of the State, and how powerfully it appeals to the attention of all.

DURATION OF THE SCHOOLS.

The number of weeks of school, sustained in the year last past, is 63,736, while the number reported for the previous year was 63,384, showing a gain upon the preceding year of 352 weeks. This indicates a slight improvement in a most necessary direction. Far too little attention has always been given, in this State, to the matter of the average duration of the schools, one of the most important items of school statistics.

It will be found by considering the number of different districts in connection with the whole number of weeks of school sustained, that the average duration of the schools for the last year has been 23 78-100 weeks, and for the year ending in March, 1863, it was 24 weeks. Thus there is apparent a gradual diminution of the duration of the sessions of schools for several years. This should arrest the attention of every one who desires the advancement of the general intelligence of the people and the improvement of our schools. It is believed that there is no other State in the Union that exhibits the same spectacle. If the improvement in character of the schools involved as necessary a decrease of the duration of their sessions, or if such decrease were usually found in connection with desired improvement in character elsewhere, then we might perhaps be reconciled to the decrease of duration as a matter of necessity, or of reasonable expectation. But on the contrary it will be found in other States, and indeed elsewhere generally, that an increase of the duration of the sessions of schools, is a general and indeed

universal accompaniment of any decided improvement of the quality of the schools. Why then does our State stand thus alone? It cannot be from a diminution of the interest generally taken in the success of our school system, for all know that this general interest has for years been steadily and powerfully increasing. Neither can it be on account of a prevalent impression that an improvement in the character of the schools necessarily involves a shortening of their sessions. But very little consideration is necessary to show that, other things being equal, the efficiency of a school system will be proportionate to the length of time during which it is continued in active operation. We are then compelled to suspect that there must be some peculiar characteristic of our school laws, that tends to produce this anomalous position of our State; for, with a constantly increasing attention to our schools, and an increasing faith in their capacity, when properly supported, to accomplish their work, sustained by a general conviction of the improvement in their character; there must exist some special cause for the decrease of their duration, peculiar to our system of school laws.

And indeed such is the fact. Upon examination of our school laws, we find that while in our State as elsewhere, there is a provision made by law for an annual distribution to each school district of a portion of the public money, that distribution is made proportional to the *average daily* attendance of the children of each district, upon the schools in each district. And secondly, we find that the only condition precedent to the receipt of each district of its portion of the public money, is that it shall have sustained, upon its own funds, two months of school.

It is to be noticed in the first place, that a condition of some kind, either that school of some description shall be sustained for some specified time, or that some certain amount of money shall be raised by taxation and expended in support of public schools, has been prescribed by every State in which any provision has been made for the support of public schools that are free to all.

In this State the amount of public money thus distributed to the various districts in the State exceeds \$100,000, and is nearly equal to one-third of the whole expenditure in the year for the support of the common schools. That the distribution of so large an amount of money may easily be made, by affixing conditions to its reception, to exert a powerful influence upon the character of the schools is very apparent. It is a matter of great importance then, that the distribution of this large amount should be so arranged as to be conducive to the gradual improvement of the character of the schools in all practicable directions, and to their more generous and judicious support by the various communities. And, if the school laws of the State do not secure this effect from such distribution as fully

as may be, then the best good of all evidently requires that they should be amended.

This topic has again and again been commented upon in the Annual Report, but so long as there appears to be a deficiency in the law, which stands apparently in the way of the steady improvement in the character of our schools, and manifestly derogates from their efficiency, there is abundant reason for continuing the discussion. The topic received careful consideration in the last Annual Report, and, I reproduce here what was said in that report, as being more pointed and forcible than anything new that I can offer:

"To increase the efficiency of the schools, is the direct and ostensible as well a acknowledged object, of all educational discussions and efforts. But schools are mere instrumentalities, agencies, tools, so to speak, for the accomplishment of certain specific purposes, and the success attending their use and operation, will, it is true, depend greatly upon the intrinsic excellence of the schools themselves; but not exclusively so, for the efficiency of any agency in the accomplishment of any given work, will be increased or diminished by expanding or contracting its sphere of labor, and by extending or shortening the time during which it continues in operation.

The average duration of the sessions of the common schools in our State for many years, has been quite small as compared with that of some of the other States, and indeed with all of them that profess to sustain a public free school system. This does not arise from pecuniary inability, neither does it proceed from a pronounced want of attachment to, or appreciation of the common schools. It comes simply from an absence of that frequent and urgent discussion which is so necessary to preserve a wholesome and vigilant public sentiment in reference to any topic of commanding social or moral moment.

That a good school is better than a bad one is plain enough, and is commonly enough understood; and that a bad school is something worse than good for nothing is beginning to be generally believed. That a good school, other things being equal, will accomplish more for the public good than can one of an inferior quality, is also as true as it is generally conceded. But it is not by any means as clearly perceived and believed that "other things" not "being equal" the same rule does not apply with equal force. It is not always, or commonly true, that a good school that remains in operation only for a short time in each year after a long interval to be succeeded by another equally good, will accomplish more good than a school in some respects inferior, that continues in session for a much longer period. Very few are aware of the extent to which the possible capacity of a public system of schools in actual opera

tion is diminished by apparently slight causes that are by most minds entirely unnoticed or disregarded.

A brief inspection of the statistical facts reported with special reference to their bearing upon this particular point may not be useless, it certainly will be suggestive. Beginning then with the legitimate hypothesis that the public school system of a State is organically intended to provide necessary instruction for the children of the whole State within certain limits that are recognized and prescribed, it is to be supposed to be adequate to the accomplishment of this specific object. The school system of this State then as it exists and is practically operated, is to be supposed to be adequate to give necessary instruction to all the children of the State in the specific brancher of study particularly mentioned in the general law. And for the accomplishment of this general object the people of the State expend in support of this system, directly and indirectly, an amount not much, if any, less than a half million of dollars annually.

The whole No. of children between 4 and 18 years of age reported is 88,453. Of this aggregate number only 64,042 have attended school at all, and the average attendance has been only 44,628. But of the children actually attending the school, by far the larger proportion are, as is well known to common observation, quite young, and to them, as yet immature and almost entirely untrained in thought and study, it is a matter of so great consequence as to be indispensable to any fair and satisfactory progress, that such instruction as may be given them in their earlier years, should be given as continuously, or with as few and short intervals of intellectual idleness as is possible. When these same minds have become more matured and are habituated to hard study and severe thought, then a period of strong intellectual activity may occasionally or indeed often be succeeded by intervals of comparative intellectual inaction with little prejudice. But with quite young pupils, habits of study and thought and intellectual activity are precisely the most desirable because the most valuable results that school culture can possibly give. But the average duration of the sessions of the schools of the State taken together is, as we have seen, a little less than twenty-four weeks. If we look a little farther we find that with 2946 different districts we have had during the past year 4620 different teachers. Thus it appears that of the 2946 districts 2142, or more than 80 per cent. of them have employed within the year the services of two teachers. Allowing for the effect upon the average duration, or the fact that the Graded Schools, and the schools in the more populous towns almost uniformly remain in session for eight or nine months in the year, it will be apparent that the average duration of the schools in the smaller districts and

towns cannot be longer than about twenty weeks. Taking all these facts together, then, it will appear that in a large proportion of the schools the prevalent custom must be to secure the services of a teacher and sustain a school for two and one-half months, and then at the close of that term to allow a vacation of three and one-half months, after which another teacher is engaged and a school supported for another term of two and one-half months, to which succeeds another vacation of three and one-half months.

Manifestly then under such management, even if the two terms thus widely separated by intervening vacations, were taught by the same person, the children would of necessity be deprived of that prolonged and continuous necessity for mental activity, that alone can infix in their minds those studious and thoughtful proclivities that are the very best fruits of successful teaching. The little that is learned during the term of school, too, is liable to be lost to a great extent in the long vacation, and so the result of the whole year's instruction is vastly less than it might easily be under more reasonable and philosophic modes of procedure. Then these evils are immensely aggravated and the prospect of satisfactory improvement is indefinitely removed by the almost universal prevalence of the custom of discharging the teacher, however successful, at the close of the term, for no assignable and declared reasons, and engaging a new instructor without any other particular recommendation except that he or she is a new teacher.

A prolongation of the terms of school, to be brought about by thorough and frequent discussion, operating upon public sentiment, and by positive modification of law, seems to be the only adequate remedy for the evils alluded to; and as this matter has often been before discussed, I venture here to reproduce from a former report some suggestions upon the subject, simply because they present the matter as clearly and forcibly, and perhaps more so than anything new that I can say.

In connection with this topic I deem it a duty again to call attention to the probable efficacy of a modification of the law in regard to the distribution of the public money in securing a prolongation of the duration of the public schools.

Regarding the necessity of general intelligence to the permanent prosperity of republican institutions as conceded and in view of the undoubted pecuniary ability of Vermont to adopt all measures that are demonstrably necessary to her own growth and strength, it is not an unreasonable proposition to say that the public schools, where, as the statistics of the present year show, nine out of every ten of the children of the State are to receive all the culture that schools will ever give them, should remain in session at least for from $7\frac{1}{2}$ to $8\frac{1}{2}$ months, i. e. for from 60 to 70 per cent of each year.

It would be better for the State that the opportunities for receiving a culture that is admitted to be necessary should thus be augmented; and it would be better for the children that they thus for a longer proportionate time should be subjected to the moral and mental discipline of the schools. All this is so manifest that as we look over the statistics, we wonder that the people of a State like Vermont, apt enough to take not a little pride in their established reputation for general intelligence, should year after year allow their public school-houses to remain vacant for more than half of the time. This discrepancy between the ostensible and sometimes ostentatious appreciation of the theory of the public school system, and the actual practice under it, is so great that the immediate inference is that there must be, either patent or latent, powerful causes for such discrepancy. And a little examination reveals at least two features of our school law, whose tendencies to shorten the terms of school are apparent upon even slight considerations.

Wherever in any of the States a public school fund is found to exist, the proceeds of which are periodically distributed in aid of the various school municipalities, it will be found, and I think invariably, that a certain amount of local expenditure to be provided for by self-imposed local taxation, is made a condition precedent to the receipt of any portion of the general public fund. The local expenditure is commonly measured by the duration of the schools thereby sustained; and therefore the common proviso is, that no school municipality shall receive any portion of the proceeds of the general school fund, unless it shall have contributed to the support of its own schools a certain fixed amount of money, or fixed proportion of the assessed value of its real or personal estate, or, as is more commonly the provision, shall have sustained a legal public school upon its own local funds, for a certain fixed number of weeks or months. This fixed time, during which schools shall thus be supported, varies in the different States adopting this method. In Michigan, for instance, the time is fixed at three months. In Maine no local municipality can receive any portion of the public money, unless it shall during the previous year have raised by taxes an amount equivalent to sixty cents for each inhabitant. In Massachusetts by general law every town is compelled to sustain at least six months school in the year, and can have no portion of the proceeds of the public school fund, unless it shall have expended for teachers' wages, board and fuel and expense of making fires and taking care of the school-house, an amount equivalent to \$1.50 for each inhabitant.

In Vermont the support of two months' school upon its own funds by each school district, is made the condition precedent to its receiving any share of the public money. And, in practice, the law not specifying the kind of school that shall be sustained by

each district, a two months' school in the summer season, when no fuel is necessary, taught by a female teacher at little expense, is supposed to constitute a full compliance with the law. From the statistics the average wages of female teachers for the last year is \$8.16. The expense of a two months' school then, would consist of two months' wages for a female teacher \$16.32, and two months' board, which at \$2 per week would be \$16—making in all \$32.32. Now the whole number of children between 4 and 18 reported is 85,795 and the whole number of districts, whole and fractional, being 2,682, the average number of resident children between 4 and 18 in each district is 32. The whole amount of public money distributed in 1862-3 was \$104,754, which gives \$1.22 to each of the resident children between 4 and 18. Each district then, having an average number of 32 resident children between 4 and 18, for each of which it receives \$1.22 from the public money for its compliance with the terms of the law by supporting a two months' school at an average expense of \$32.32, receives \$39.04. It is submitted that such a condition precedent to the reception of a proportion of the public money, is altogether too light and easy to give adequate and proper stimulus to the support of thoroughly good schools for a sufficient length of time.

Again, whatever be the period selected, during which districts or towns are required imperatively, as in Massachusetts, or persuasively as in Vermont, to sustain schools upon their own funds, as it is long or short, it will by serving as a sort of guide, in fact control the time during which, for the remainder of each year, custom will require the schools to be open. In other words, the average duration of the schools in the State will, in all probability, be less when the law imperatively requires schools to be supported by local taxation for only two months, than it would be if the general law required the schools to be supported thus for three or four months. Hence it may well be doubted whether the duration of the sessions of the schools, and of course their efficiency, would not be increased by a lengthening of the terms during which the various districts shall be required to sustain schools upon their own funds, as condition upon which their receipt of any portion of the public money shall be based.

Another cause of the comparative brevity of the sessions of the public schools in this State, may be found in the method adopted in making distribution of the public money to the various districts. This matter was particularly alluded to in the report of last year, but if at all instrumental in shortening the duration of the importance of its consequences will sufficiently account for its re-introduction.

Under existing laws the public money is distributed annually to

the various towns in proportion to their respective population. Then annually at the time appointed, the selectmen of each town distribute a fixed portion of the distributive share of the public money already apportioned to such towns, among the various districts of such towns that have complied with all the conditions of the law, in proportion to the average daily attendance of the children of such district upon the public schools of such district. This average daily attendance is ascertained by dividing the aggregate attendance upon each public school, by the number of days during which such school has been sustained. A little consideration will show that while such a method of distribution tends very manifestly to encourage regularity of attendance upon the schools while they are in session, it not only does not tend to induce a lengthening of the terms of the schools, but must necessarily have a strong tendency to encourage short sessions. For it is plainly more difficult to sustain a high rate of average attendance upon a school that is sustained eight months, than upon one that is sustained only four months. And the rule, other things being equal, will be found to be, that the shorter the term of any school, the higher will be the rate of average attendance. Thus the effect of the law of the distribution of the public money, under which the distributive share of each district increases or diminishes in direct proportion to the increase or diminution of its average daily attendance, operates directly and powerfully to discourage lengthened terms of schools. And this method of distribution is also unjust and unequal in its bearing upon different districts. And, as illustrative of this fact, and to conclude what I desire to say in this connection, I will take the liberty to insert an extract from the Report of last year.

If district A with an earnest desire to promote the welfare of its children sustains a school for eight months in a year with an average daily attendance of eighteen; while district B with a more scrupulous economy of dollars, although having the same number of children of school age, sustains its school for only five months, and from the very brevity of its sessions, with an average attendance of twenty pupils;—district B will, under the law, receive a larger portion of the public money than district A, because the distributive share of a district depends upon its average daily attendance, without any reference to the length of the term. Thus the law operates unequally upon the two districts, and with manifest injustice to the district which has taxed itself the highest in support of its schools.

In the original draft of the school law of 1858, the distribution of this portion of the public money was directed to be made to the various districts in proportion to the *aggregate* daily attendance

upon the schools. By this means, regularity of attendance and length of term were both taken into account, and each district would receive a share of the public money directly proportioned to the efforts it might have made in the support of schools. But during the passage of the act through the Legislature, its phraseology was changed and the distributive share of each district was made to depend upon the *average daily* attendance, instead of upon the *aggregate daily* attendance. I have always doubted the wisdom and expediency of the change, and desire to commend this subject to the special consideration of the Board.

EXPENDITURES FOR SCHOOLS.

The principal items in the account of expenditures for schools during the year has been as follows :

For wages to male teachers,	\$ 59,289
“ “ “ female, “	143,263
“ board of teachers,	131,763
“ fuel, furniture and incidentals,	47,565
“ erecting school houses,	22,838
“ repairing “ “	16,723

Making a total of.....\$421,441

The expenditures for the same items for the previous year amounted to \$420,891 ; but the expenditures in the erection and repair of school houses were \$17,204 less during the last than during the previous year, hence, for the ordinary expenses of the public schools \$17,754 more were expended in the last than in the previous year.

In this very large expenditure may be found matter worthy the attention of all careful and thoughtful men. This phase of the subject of public schools may well appeal to every tax-payer, whether he be a parent directly interested in the education of his own children or not. Free schools always have been, and always will be necessary incidents of republican existence and growth. No one anticipates a time when our State, or any of the loyal States will be without a State system of schools for the education of the children of the commonwealth ; and these schools are to be supported, in the main, by a direct taxation of all the property of the State. These schools will be constantly improving in character, and of course demanding and receiving a constantly increasing amount of money, to be expended in their support. Here then, is a view of the subject of popular education which claims and will enforce a hearing, from all that dwell within and are liable to the common and inevitable burdens of the State, not particularly as philanthropists or benevolent men, but as tax-payers—as men who have a common burden

which there is no hope of shaking off. The *ordinary* expenses of the State for the last year, according to the Treasurer's Annual Report, were a little less than \$193,000. This means the common expense of carrying on the State Government, without including the many and great expenditures caused directly and indirectly by the late terrible war. Now a tax-payer who should profess to be, or should in reality be, indifferent to or careless and thoughtless about the nature of the common expenditure ordinarily and necessarily involved in carrying on the government of the commonwealth, who should refuse to examine into the nature and amount of such necessary expenditures and exercise no vigilance about, or be unwilling to allow any supervision of the outlay of such a sum of money, even for the most necessary purposes, would be considered rash and heedless, and would with difficulty retain a reputation for ordinary common sense.

But the statistics show that the expenditure during the year last past for the support of the common schools in the State, are, including all expenses, more than \$30,000, larger than twice the expenditure ordinarily necessary to support the civil government of the State.

There is an influential class of men in every community, composed of the active, enterprising men of business, in all the various avocations of society, who have long persisted in looking upon all efforts to improve the character of the schools as matters of merely moral and philanthropic concern, well enough for those who desire to employ themselves in this direction, but, upon the whole, rather beneath the attention of "business men." Such men seldom attend the school meeting, except for the purpose of opposing taxation, they will not accept any of the offices, or perform any of the necessary work of the district. And the opposition and indifference of this large and powerful class has long stood directly in the way of a steady and decided improvement of the schools. And yet, so long as we must expect that, while the republican institutions of our fathers stand, the free schools will stand with them, and will be always calling for more and still more money by which they are to be sustained, thus fixing forever upon every citizen a constantly augmenting burden of taxation; it would seem to be the first duty of every man, as a tax-payer, to unite with others in securing an economical and efficient expenditure of the money raised. This duty is fully recognized in every other direction and in every other possible connection. And yet the shrewd and sharp man, who will insist that the community shall receive a full and adequate return in value, for all monies expended in building of roads and bridges, will be comparatively indifferent as to what return may be received for money expended in providing schools.

A widely accepted impression that schools are merely moral and patriotic agencies that appeal entirely to the sympathies of quiet and moral and philanthropic men, and cannot in any special sense concern the active and busy men who in politics and in business are prominent in the transaction of affairs, has very much hindered the advancement of improvement in our schools.

To such men, and they form a very numerous and a very important portion of our citizens, the revelations of the educational statistics, showing an actual expenditure of more than twice the amount of the ordinary expenses of supporting the civil government of the State, come with a power that will, ere long, be evinced by an increase of interest and of effort.

It may be doubted whether the earnest advocate of a better system of schools for the promotion of popular education, have not erred in confining their efforts too much to the higher and nobler moral phases of the great subject of education. Those who are most accessible, through appeals to their appreciation of the claims of education as proceeding from such higher moral grounds, are already, and always will be, almost of necessity deeply interested in the common topic, and need but little urging. To fasten the attention and enlist the efforts of that portion of society, whose engrossment in the actual affairs of community causes a disinclination to give much attention to what they deem to be only humanitarian or moral views of any subject, a thorough discussion of the more practical views of education, has been and will be necessary. Such men need first and most, to be convinced of the intimate connection between education and the every-day affairs of the community; they need to see clearly how closely and inevitably the improvement of the agencies for general culture, and the advancement of all the material interests of society are intertwined. With such men no eloquence has the power which attends the stern, sharp and inevitable logic of facts.

And when, to them, the statistical summary comes with its declarations, undeniably true, that nearly a half million of dollars is annually paid out for the common schools, and asks why the outlay of so enormous a sum, that must annually recur, and be raised by direct taxation of the property of every individual, should not be attended with as thorough a supervision and as rigid an accounting as if made for any other and common purpose? they have and can have no answer.

The effect that has attended the publication of the annual statistics, in arresting the attention of indifferent men, is the best vindication, at once of their necessity and their power.

TEACHERS—THEIR NUMBER.

There have been employed in the various schools during the last

school year, 4,721 different persons as teachers. This is a larger number, by 101, than were employed during the preceding year. The statistics do not give the number of male and female teachers respectively, but do give the number of weeks taught by each. There have been 9,391 weeks of school taught by male teachers, being an increase of 662 weeks upon the returns of the previous year. The number of weeks of school taught by females is 54,340, which is less by 215 weeks than was returned in the year before. It will thus be seen that the number of weeks of school sustained during the year is larger by 447 weeks than in the previous year. But the number of districts reported is larger, and thus the average duration of the schools is not increased.

It thus appears that a little over fourteen per cent. of the schools that have been sustained, have been taught by males, while a little more than eighty-five per cent. have been taught by female teachers. A very large proportion of the young men, who were engaged as teachers in the schools of all grades at the breaking out of the war, enlisted in the federal army, and thus was expedited a movement that had for many years been gaining ground, in the substitution of women for men as teachers of the public schools. And the statistics of the present year show but a very slight tendency to return to the former practice. Of the men formerly employed in the schools, few that have survived the perils and hardships of the war, will ever resume the vocation of teaching; they will seek more active and exciting employment. And while all perceive that here and there are particular schools that demand the strong arms and vigorous government of male teachers, still the progressive improvement of our schools while passing more and more rapidly into the hands of female teachers, has given rise to a very general and well-grounded opinion, that the experience of schools fully corroborates the idea that women are naturally better adapted to the difficult, delicate and trying work of teaching the young than men can be.

Hence there is good reason to believe that although, in the future, the present proportion of females to males as teachers, may not continue, still females will largely outnumber the males in this vocation; and that probably for many years, at least five-sixths of all our common schools will be taught by women.

There is another point connected with the number of teachers annually employed in the common schools of great moment, and that is the tendency of the employment of so large a number of different teachers to diminish the power of each to do effective service. It will be evident, on examination of the statistics, that the number of school districts being 2,647, and the number of different teachers employed being 4,721, there must have been 2074 districts that have employed each two different teachers during the year, and

that each teacher, making allowance for the longer terms of those employed in the higher graded schools, must have taught less than three months.

When we reflect how seldom, in any other vocation, or the prosecution of any ordinary business, employers are induced voluntarily to change, without controlling reason, those whom they employ, it seems incredible that the contrary should be the case in reference to the teachers who are employed in the public service. In the carrying on of any commercial or manufacturing or agricultural business, every one recognizes the sound policy of retaining in any given employment as long as possible such assistants as acquit themselves satisfactorily in the discharge of the duties intrusted to them. No sane man, engaged in any business would allow persons to leave his employ, when he was satisfied with their work, without good and sufficient reason. The habit of changing help without good reason, would alone be sufficient to characterize as incompetent any employer who should in any other business follow so foolish a custom. It would be universally thought that the acquaintance of an experienced person with the business he followed, and his knowledge of the nature of his duties under the circumstances peculiar to his employer, his familiarity with the nature of his duties and skill in creating the necessary results by use of the means at his disposal, all would demand that, while he gave satisfaction, he should be retained as long as possible, even at an increased rate of wages.

And surely no intelligent man can suppose that the transaction of any of the ordinary kinds of practical business can require more skill in order to its successful accomplishment, than is demanded of the teacher who, out of the crude and untrained faculties and ungoverned dispositions of a crowd of children is to construct, as well as possible, in each a useful and symmetric manhood or womanhood. As an abstract proposition, then, every one would admit, that a permanence of employment, desirable in every other possible connection, is more desirable in securing the services of valuable teachers than in any other possible connection or relation than can exist between employers and employed.

Experience also shows, that a familiar acquaintance, by the teacher, with the powers and tendencies of the pupil, as well as with the character and wishes and habits and peculiar characteristics of the parents, adds wonderfully to his power to accomplish his work well. All know how much valuable time is lost by the best teachers in the beginning of every term, in consummating as perfect an acquaintance as is possible, with the character of his scholars.

One of the strangest facts connected with the management of our schools is this, that the people of the whole State tolerate the prevalence of a constant changing of employees in the conduct of

the public schools, which would never be tolerated in the conduct of any other business whatever.

No one conversant with schools, can doubt but that full one-third could easily be added to the efficiency of our common schools, and that with little, if any expense, by making more permanent the connection between the teachers and their schools.

WAGES OF TEACHERS.

The item of the amount of wages paid to the teachers of the public schools must always be an interesting one to those who are watching the practical working of a State school system. Here is always to be found unmistakable evidence of the appreciation by the various communities of the necessary and important agencies in the great work of general elementary culture. Where a given amount of talent employed in the conduct of the public schools receives from the community a compensation equal or superior to that given to the same ability engaged in other avocations, the conclusion is patent that that community believe that the schools need and should have, in order to successful results, the services of the best skill attainable. And on the contrary, whenever by common consent and universal custom less compensation is received by the teacher than the same individuals would demand and receive, were they employed in the transaction of the ordinary branches of business usually followed, the inference is inevitable that the vocation of the teacher takes rank in importance as beneath the other and common avocations. It is on this account that the statistical returns of any community in reference to the wages paid to teachers in the public schools are eagerly scrutinized by those who wish to form a well grounded opinion in regard to the prospect of the educational agencies of a State.

The amount reported as paid to male teachers during the year for 9,391 weeks of school exclusive of board is \$59,289. This gives a compensation of \$6.30 per week or \$25.20 per month. For the previous year there was paid for 8,729 weeks of school by male teachers the sum of \$51,960, which gives \$23.80 per month; and this showed an advance of \$3.32 per month or 16 1-5 per cent-over the compensation to male teachers of the previous year. The compensation for the last year then gives an increase over the year preceding it of a little less than six per cent. So far, perhaps the showing is encouraging when we take into consideration the very heavy burden of taxation under which all are really laboring, and indicates as great advancement as could reasonably be expected.

And the statistics seem to be significant of improvement in regard to the wages paid to female teachers. During the year ending in March 1865, for 54,555 weeks of school taught by females

there was paid the gross amount of \$143,553, which gave a compensation, per week, of \$2.42 or \$9.68 per month. These returns show an increase of the average wages of females in the public schools of 11 per cent.

But the great disparity that still exists between the compensation given to men and that given to women, when employed as teachers in our common schools is as unaccountable as it is discreditable to our various communities. No person thinks of boarding a woman when employed as teacher for less than half as much as would be demanded of a male teacher; neither does any man or any community dream of tolerating a school taught by a woman that is less than half as good as would be expected of a man; why then if the same capacity and skill, and the same amount of equally skilled labor for the same time is required of a female teacher that would be demanded of a male teacher, and her necessary expenses are as large, should the whole State concur in giving women less than half the compensation that they are willing to pay to men?

The returns of the Town Superintendents for a series of years have shown an increasing excellence in the character of our common schools while an increasing tendency to substitute female for male teachers has prevailed throughout the State. Thus the facts and official returns have demonstrated that schools taught by females are not a whit inferior to those taught by males. And at the same time the opinion has been constantly gaining ground that, for by far the major part of our common schools, women are better adapted by nature as teachers, and prove to be equally well qualified by education. It would appear then that if as well adapted to the performance of the necessary labor in all respects as men are, the fact that women are by the force of the prevalent public sentiment excluded from very many of the more active and lucrative avocations in vogue, and in the selection of vocations are confined within very narrow limits, would seem to furnish the best possible reason for encouraging them to enter upon and continue in a vocation that needs their services, by paying them a fair and liberal compensation.

It is not creditable to any community that they habitually expect to secure, in the teaching of their public schools, the necessary skill, experience and power, in a female, at a less compensation than would be demanded in other and less difficult employments. Neither is it easy to see why a woman, equally well qualified, and equally successful, as a teacher, in the same school, should receive less than a man would, from any community that is not entirely composed of foundlings that have no recollection of either mother or sister.

BOARDING AROUND.

No fact disclosed by the statistics is more full of promise for the schools than this, that during the year there has been a decided diminution of the practice of boarding "around," as it is called. Notwithstanding the enactment of the Legislature of 1864, by which all the expense of the common schools is directed to be raised by "a tax upon the Grand List," and this expressly to terminate the thereto general practice of defraying the expense of the board of the teacher by a tax upon the scholar or by "boarding around;" for the year ending in March, 1865, 3,049 teachers were reported to have boarded around. But the statistics of the last year show that 1492 teachers alone have boarded around. This gives a diminution in the number, within a twelve-month, of 1557. But still, the fact that 1492 teachers should have been compelled by their employers, to violate the letter as well as the spirit of the the law of the State, is not a pleasant one to contemplate.

The phraseology of the law is as follows :

"So much of section fifty, chapter twenty-two, of the General Statutes, as relates to the apportioning the expense of fuel and teachers' board upon the scholars attending the school, or assessing a tax upon the same, is repealed.

"The remainder of section fifty, chapter twenty-two, shall be so amended as to read as follows:

"All expenses incurred by school districts for the support of schools, shall be defrayed by a tax upon the Grand List of such district."

It is impossible to mistake the import or the intent of the law. It was intended to put a final stop to the sending of teachers about the district for their board, like so many travelling mendicants. But, as is shown by the returns, the law if not disobeyed is in some way evaded, for more than one third of all the teachers employed during the year, were boarded in direct defiance of the law.

This matter is one of importance to all and although it has often been discussed in the Reports and presented in various lights, there will still remain a necessity for recurring to it while the practice survives to as great an extent as is shown at present. Adapting then the reasoning heretofore urged, to the statistical returns of the present year, I once more ask attention to the effects of a practice which every experienced friend of the schools condemns. Few movements in the educational field would be productive of more, or more immediate benefit to the schools, than the entire abolition of the habit of boarding around. But, the law being already right, the practice will continue, till a persistent agitation shall come to the support of the law, and result in a change of public sentiment that shall enforce the execution of the law. The arguments that

have been before presented in the Report are eqally applicable now.

This matter of boarding around has been habitually discussed with such exclusive reference to statements and arguments of the narrowest character and most limited scope, that the real merits of the discussion are to many entirely unknown; and the variety and evil influences of the prevalence of the practice are so great, that no excuse can be thought necessary for alluding to the subject, so long as it may prevail to any extent worthy of notice. It is claimed by those who favor the practice of boarding around in proportion to the attendance upon the school that, in the first place, by this practice an excellent opportunity is afforded the teacher to become familiarly acquainted with the parents and children of the district, and to "learn human nature"; and as these acquirements are indispensable to the teacher, therefore the teacher should board around.

In reply to this, it might be said, in the first place, admitting the necessity of an intimate acquaintance on the part of the teacher with the characters of the pupils, their parents and the citizens generally, it is not at all certain that this necessary acquaintance would be promoted by boarding a short portion of time in each family in the district.

Another reply is that, admitting the convenience of this general and particular acquaintance to the teacher, in order to enable him fully to discharge his various duties, it is no more true of the teacher than it is of the physician or of the preacher. He who cares for the bodies or the souls of men requires fully as much to know accurately all their various traits and characteristics, mental, moral or corporeal, as does he who is to care for the improvement of their minds. But the entire absurdity of the practice could never be made more apparent than by an application to the doctor and the preacher of the same practice which is thus held to be not only rational, but decidedly expedient as applied to the teacher. Suppose the application be made. The teacher, because an intimate knowledge of the various characteristic traits of character of his pupils and their parents would facilitate his efforts and give them greater effect, it is claimed, should board around among the different families; and, some measure of time being indispensable to arrange the matter of board equitably and satisfactorily, he ought to board in the different families in proportion to the number of children that attend the school, i. e., in proportion to the existing necessity in each family, for his professional assistance. Apply the same rule to the doctor; and because the judicious and effectual application to the cure of disease of the necessary and appropriate remedies, requires an intimate acquaintance with the various elements of character, moral, mental or physical, of his patients, therefore the physician should

board around; and, fixing the existing necessity for his services as the standard of time, as in the case of the teacher, the doctor should board around in proportion to the prevalence and virulence of Diphtheria and Scarlet Fever. And, as the rule is to the fullest extent equally applicable to the teacher of morals and religion, then the preacher too should board around in proportion to the prevalent wickedness and disregard of all moral right. Such an application of the principles claimed smothers them in absurdity.

It is said, in the second place, that it will be far less burdensome for many families to pay such portion of the expense of the schools as accrues from boarding the teacher, in actually boarding the teacher for the proper proportionate time, then it would be to pay it in money.

Whatever force there may be in this reasoning—and that there is some force in it is not denied—it is believed to be more than counter-balanced by facts and arguments that might be urged on the other side.

In the first place, the only logical basis upon which, in any republican State, a State system of public schools can find a stable and permanent foundation, consists in the necessity of general intelligence and virtue, in order to the general security of life and property, wherever, from the nature of the government, universal suffrage endows every individual with the character of a law-maker.

Good laws, general orderliness and peace give security to property and to life. A general diffusion of knowledge and uprightness give possibility and existence to good laws, general orderliness and peace. A general public system of schools, extending the benefits of moral and mental culture to all, can alone secure a general diffusion of knowledge and uprightness. Therefore a public system of free schools is indispensable in every republican State, and it is to be considered a matter of necessity and self-protection, and cannot be dispensed with. Therefore all the property of the State, of every description, should ratably contribute to defray all the expenses of a system of public schools without which security to property is hopeless and indeed impossible. By any logical and reasonable theory of republicanism, then, all the expenses of the public schools should be defrayed by a tax upon the Grand List; or, in other words, upon the property of the community. And so any attempt to distribute the expense of the board of the teacher, or of any other item of the expense of sustaining the public schools in proportion to the scholars that may attend the school, is in direct contravention of all the theoretical principles of democratic institutions.

As a matter of practical experiment, too, the statistics furnish reason to believe that the apportionment of the expense of boarding

the teacher and of fuel upon the scholars who may attend the school, has operated most disastrously for the State.

The State system of public schools must, as a matter of theory, be supposed to be adequate for the purpose for which it was designed, in other words, adequate to give necessary culture to the 88,8772 children reported as of school age. And for this agency, thus theoretically sufficient for the accomplishment of its work, the people annually pay \$500,000. And this vast sum is paid, not as a matter of ornamental or philanthropic policy, but as a matter of stern necessity. The State needs that all her 88,772 children should be instructed as a matter of indispensable self-protection. Whatever, then, stands in the way of, or prevents the accomplishment by the schools of their appropriate and allotted work, is prejudicial to the highest interests of the State.

Now a glance at the statistics shows us that some agency or power does stand in the way of the accomplishment by the schools of their proper work. The statistics show that while the whole number of the children of the State of school age, between 4 and 18 years of age is, 88,772; of all these children only 69,708 have attended school at all. This gives 19,064, or 21 per cent of the whole, that during the past year have not attended school at all. And looking a little farther, we find that the average attendance upon the schools of those between the ages of 4 and 20 has been 44,922, and if from this we take the probable average attendance of pupils between 18 and 20 years, which is 1521, we shall have the average attendance upon the schools of the children between 4 and 18 years to be 43,401 which is 49 per cent, or less than one-half. But if a system of schools organically sufficient for the education of 88,772 children within certain limits, cost \$500,000, and yet while sufficient to teach all, is so operated and under such circumstances as to educate only 49 per cent, or less than one-half of the children for whom it is intended and is adequate; than if figures prove anything, these figures prove that one-half of the State expenditures for schools, or \$250,000, is lost.

It is a little strange that among a sharp and a shrewd people, a greater effort has not been hitherto made to discover the cause or causes of so great wastefulness. What then is the leading causes of an average absence from the public schools of more than half of the children of the State, for whose instruction they were organized.

Perhaps a slight inspection of the statistics, together with certain known facts respecting the practical operation of the school system, will help us to give a reasonable and probable answer to this question.

Allowing that an average district pursues the course generally

practice¹, and figuring expenses in accordance with the discoveries of the statistics, the following nearly will be the result.

At the annual meeting the plan will be proposed and accepted of sustaining a two months summer school upon the Grand List, then putting the board and fuel for the whole year upon the scholar, and then to sustain as many more weeks of school as will suffice to exhaust the public money. According to this plan, the expenses will be nearly as follows: upon the property will be paid the expense of two months summer school taught by a woman because it will be less expensive. Two months school by a female teacher, at the statistical average price \$10.52 per month will cost \$21.04. It being summer there will be no expense for fuel. And as the board of the teacher and fuel are to be put upon the scholar, and only enough more school be taught to expend the public money, of which the average amount to each district is \$41, there will be nothing more in the way of expense to be paid upon the Grand List.

Upon the scholar will be levied taxes to pay the board of the teacher for the average term—24 weeks—at the average price ascertained by the year's statistics, of \$2 per week, amounting to \$48, and to pay the expense of fuel for the year which may be estimated at five cords, which, at \$3.50 per cord, will amount to \$17.50. In the supposed district then pursuing the ordinary course, and regulating the expenses entirely in accordance with the revelations of the statistics, the property of the district will pay \$21.04, and the children of the district attending school will pay the sum of \$65.50. When we call to mind the uniformity with which children seem to be distributed to the families everywhere in inverse proportion to their pecuniary ability, it will be apparent that the average amount of public money distributed, \$41, which is distributed mainly in proportion to the average attendance of the children the major portion of whom come from the poorer families, the inequality and injustice of the practice of boarding around becomes very apparent. The statistics show the aggregate average number of children attending the schools to have been 44,922. This aggregate average attendance divided by the whole number of districts, gives 16 as the average daily attendance of each district. Now dividing the \$65.50, the average amount to be paid by each district upon the scholars attending the schools, by the average number 16, attending school constantly, we have \$4.09 to be paid by each scholar attending.

Surely when thus it is seen that under the practice of boarding around, by far the heaviest taxes necessary in the support of the school are levied upon the scholar, the property paying less than one-fourth while the scholars pay three-fourths, there can be little doubt that one powerful agency in diminishing the attendance upon the schools is discovered.

But, it is said that "when a poor man is really unable to board the teacher, we pass him by and let him go." But what right has any man or set of men so to manage a system of republican institutions as to compel a citizen on account of poverty to accept as a charity from his neighbors what belongs to him of right from the government, of which, though poor he is a constituent part?

But other and stronger objections may well be urged against the boarding around practice. By the statistics we have discovered that more than four-fifths of the districts employ two teachers annually, and common observation shows that a very large proportion of these teachers are quite young and inexperienced. All teachers need daily study and exertion and thought in order to enable them to sustain the necessary interest in the various branches which they teach. This is of course especially true of the younger teachers; and it may be said that the most prominent want of our schools is not so much a better class of teachers, as a better application of the latent capacity now possessed by the present teachers. But without study—daily study and thought—the best powers of our teachers cannot be developed. Whatever then has a tendency to encourage and promote the habit of study and thought on the part of our teachers in the effort daily to increase their power and efficiency in giving instruction, operates directly and powerfully to the improvement of the school. But in order to the possibility of this thought and study on the part of the teacher he must have quiet retirement and opportunity for study. Herein is the specially mischievous tendency of the practice of boarding around, that it absolutely precludes the teacher from that daily study and effort, without which even an old teacher must constantly deteriorate, and without which a young teacher must fail; and in so doing strikes directly at the improvement of the schools.

It is also true that wherever the practice of putting the expense of board and fuel upon the scholar has prevailed, it has ever been a source of constant quarrel and discussion; for, diametrically opposed in principle to the general tenor and spirit of republican institutions, effort after effort will be made when occasion offers to substitute a more democratic and equitable custom, and the result has often been to keep the district in a constant strife and to embitter the feelings of citizens, and thus to diminish the good effect of the school.

The Legislature at a recent session most wisely enacted laws intended to put a final termination to this undemocratic and injurious custom; and while they remain in force, in spite of the efforts of ingenious men to avoid the effect of the law by cunning devices and exceeding shrewd tricks; and in spite of efforts already actively in operation to procure the repeal of the law; it is to be *hoped not only* that no repeal will ever be attained, but that addi-

tional legislation will so construe the laws already enacted that a practice which drives the children of the poor from the public schools ; which deprives the teachers of all opportunity for study and self improvement ; which creates an excessive inequality of taxation ; which compels men, merely on account of poverty, to meekly receive as beggars the full enjoyment of valuable privileges that belong to them of right ; which tends always to excite bitterness and a spirit of unrest and animosity, shall be forever eradicated. While we thank the good Father that with all its many burdens and sorrows, this terrible war has destroyed the venom and the power of the spirit of caste that for many long years has cursed one portion of our common country, let us pray that the same spirit may not find a refuge in the glens of the Green Mountains, and by levying taxes for the support of education "upon the scholar" seal forever the fountain of knowledge to the children of the poor and the needy.

ATTENDANCE UPON THE SCHOOLS.

The topic of attendance upon the schools as furnishing perhaps the most reliable test of the actual working power of a school system, must always be one of very great importance. All existing systems of educational statistics are so imperfect, that with some particular items although we may compass a degree of accuracy that will enable us to compare the progress of one year with another ; we still can only approximate to absolute accuracy. This is especially true in regard to the item of attendance upon the schools. The bases of statistical knowledge are different in different States, and this is particularly true of aggregate and average attendance. In some States, in keeping the School Registers, the teacher is directed, in making the record of attendance to disregard and pass over without mention, any who may have attended less than one, two or three weeks. This practice, while it will diminish the aggregate attendance, will oftentimes very decidedly increase the average daily attendance. In all public schools there will be a class of pupils who begin to attend school from curiosity or with a view to create disturbance and who when they find they are to be subjected to a wholesome discipline, will soon leave. The average daily attendance of the school will be increased by disregarding the few days' attendance of such and making up the record as though they had never attended at all.

The practice in our schools is to make up the record entire, in strict accordance with the facts, and thus the average daily attendance upon the schools, will appear to be less, when compared with States following a different course, than it really is. But, as the same course is pursued year after year, the record furnishes a reliable test of our progress from time to time.

The whole number of children between the ages of four and eighteen years reported for the year is 88,772 being an increase of 319 upon the number reported for the previous year. The whole number of scholars between four and eighteen years that have attended school at all is 69,708. The number of scholars between 18 and 20 that have attended is 2,580. The aggregate average attendance upon the schools of scholars between the ages of 4 and 20 is 44,922. If from this last number we take the proportionate average attendance of the scholars between 18 and 20 which is 1,692, we shall have 44,320 as the aggregate average attendance upon the schools of children between 4 and 18. In other words the aggregate average attendance of scholars between 4 and 18 years upon the schools during the past year has been 49 9-10 per cent. or a little short of one-half. The percentage of last year was 48 7-10 upon which we have made a gain of 1 2-10 per cent.

This small increase is a matter of congratulation, and yet the fact that more than one-half of all the children of school age do not upon an average, attend the common school at all during the year, is really a startling one, and so strange as to be almost incredible.

Surely all who love the State, all who are looking hopefully to her future, should be effectually aroused, and all should combine to search out the causes, and discover and apply the remedies. A leading cause of this scanty attendance upon the schools, provided at so great expense for all, is the fact that, until the recent adoption of a statistical system, no means existed by which any accuracy of knowledge whatever could be attained; no one supposed it possible that the attendance could be so small. If interrogated in regard to this point now, scarcely a man, judging solely by his own impressions, would estimate the average attendance of scholars as less than 65 or 70 per cent. It is to be hoped, and may reasonably be expected that, gradually, the yearly presentation of the statistics, will do a good work in fastening general attention upon the matter, and thus excites that wide and earnest discussion which alone can enable us to show a better record.

Another reason for the toleration of so open and general a disregard and neglect of opportunities so invaluable by the growing men and women of the State, is to be found in the fact before referred to, that the care of the educational interests of the community has, in former times, been considered by the active men in business and in politics, to be rather beneath their attention, or without the scope of their accustomed sphere. Public agitation and the placing, by recent enactment, of the whole burden of the support of the schools upon the property of the State, will do much to counteract the effect of this cause. But this agitation should be vastly more general than heretofore, to be of much service. The efforts of the teachers, and local and general officials alone can do but little in

awakening general attention. We need the co-working of the press and the pulpit to a much greater degree than it has ever been given. Both of these agencies have done a great deal, but the vastness of the work remaining, requires very much more of the same work, in order to effect rapid progress.

Another reason, that may account for the small average attendance upon the common schools, is that our laws give no encouragement directly or indirectly to attendance, and impose no penalties or even disabilities upon non-attendance; and the result is, that while the safety and necessity of the community are made the grounds of compelling every property-holder to contribute pro-rata to the support of schools that are intended and supposed to be adequate to give all necessary instruction to the children of the whole State; there is no corresponding obligation imposed upon citizens to avail themselves of the opportunities thus offered. Other States have already endeavored, by proper legislation, to set the whole matter right. In the Constitution of the State of Massachusetts, as recently revised, it is provided that:—

ART. 20.—No person shall have the right to vote, or be eligible to office under the constitution of this commonwealth, who shall not be able to read the Constitution in the English language, and write his name; provided however, that the provisions of this amendment shall not apply to any person prevented by a physical disability from complying with its requisitions, nor to any person who now has the right to vote, nor to any person who shall be sixty years of age or upwards at the time this amendment shall take effect.

And, in the General Statutes of the same State, are found the following provisions:—

CHAP. 41.—SEC. 1.—Every person having under his control a child between the ages of eight and fourteen years, shall annually during the continuance of his control send such child to some public school in the city or town in which he resides, at least twelve weeks, if the public schools of such city or town so long continue, six weeks of which time shall be consecutive; and for any neglect of such duty the party offending shall forfeit to the use of such city or town a sum not exceeding twenty dollars: but if it appears, upon the inquiry of the truant-officers or School Committee of any city or town, or upon the trial of any prosecution, that the party so neglecting was not able, by reason of poverty, to send such child to school, or to furnish him with the means of education, or that such child has been otherwise furnished with the means of education for a like period of time, or has already acquired the branches of learning taught in the public schools, or that his bodily or mental condition has been such as to prevent his attendance at school or application to study for the period required, the penalty before mentioned shall not be incurred.

CHAP. 42.—SEC. 4.—Each city or town may make all needful provisions and arrangements concerning habitual truants, and children not attending school, or without any regular and lawful occupation, or growing up in ignorance, between the ages of five and sixteen years; and also all such by-laws respecting such children as shall be deemed most conducive to their welfare, and the good order of such city or town; and there shall be annexed to such by-laws suitable penalties, not exceeding twenty dollars, for any one breach: provided that such by-laws shall be approved by the Superior Court of the County.

SEC. 5.—The several cities and towns availing themselves of the provisions of the preceding section, shall appoint at the annual meetings of such towns, or annually by the mayor or aldermen of such cities, three or more persons, who alone shall be authorized, in case of violation of such by-laws, to make the complaint and carry into execution the judgments thereon.

SEC. 6.—A minor convicted under such by-law, of being an habitual truant, or of not attending school, or of being without regular and lawful occupation, or growing up in ignorance, may, at the discretion of the Justice or Court having jurisdiction of the case, instead of the fine mentioned in Section 4, be committed to any such institution of instruction, house of reformation, or suitable situation provided for the purpose under authority of Section 4, for such time, not exceeding two years, as such Justice or Court may determine.

These laws are certainly very suggestive; and both equity and safety demand that the question of the right and duty of the State to provide by requisite legislation for securing to the commonwealth the full benefit of her system of public schools should be deliberately considered and solved.

The subject is as delicate and difficult as it is important; but it may be doubted whether both the delicacy and the difficulty do not arise from a prevalent and mistaken theory of the nature of the public school system which lacks truth, and of course soundness. It is frequently said that "such is the independence and self-assertion of the republican citizen, that you cannot compel him to accept even an acknowledged benefit, until he both desires and seeks it." Now such language, and all similar propositions, are based upon the hypothesis, that the common school system of a republican State is an ingenious contrivance to compel the property of the State to contribute to the support of a common school system, whose benefits are to be available to the children of those who have little or no property, as an act of kindness or charity to the poorer classes. And hence it is said the plan is a good one—its intent is instinct with kindness; but when you have offered the benefaction, you cannot compel him, whom you would benefit, to receive it unless he is willing. Such reasoning is perhaps well

enough, if it be admitted that the underlying basis of a public school system is simple kindness or charity, as might possibly be alleged of a State system of poor laws ; which apparently must rest upon the moral and social obligation of society to relieve individuals from actual want and consequent sufferings, by extending to them the charity and kindness of the community.

But in reality such is not at all the character of the logical basis of a State school system under republican institutions. Such a system must stand, and cannot stand otherwise, than on the inevitable necessities of a democratic form of government. In monarchies, oligarchies or despotisms, the humbler and poorer classes, not having any actual share in the control or direction of the government, may or may not be allowed to partake of the benefits of a State system of schools, established by the richer and abler classes ; and in either case the logical basis of the government, that it exists for the benefit of a class or classes, is not at all disturbed.

But under democratic institutions the rule is precisely the opposite. The logical and actual basis of democratic government is that all power is in the whole people, to be exercised by the whole people and for the benefit of the whole people. Thus each individual citizen is assumed to be of right a co-equal and co-ordinate legislator, theoretically, in proportion to the freedom of the elective franchise—equally responsible for, because he equally contributes to the construction of the character of the government and its laws.

Thus, then, as the existence, the improvement and the stability of a government—by the whole people, depends absolutely upon the aggregate of the intelligence and integrity of each individual of the whole people, it follows that, under republican institutions, public schools are inaugurated and supported, not at all as a matter of charity or kindness, but as imperatively demanded by inevitable necessity, and as indispensable to the safety of the government and the protection of life and property under it.

There is not a jot more of charity or kindness wrought into the logical basis of a State system of education than there is in the foundation of a State system of penal laws. However paradoxical it may seem, there is just as much of intrinsic charity in hanging a man who has committed murder as there is in giving the boy such culture while young, as will lead him when a man to avoid all transgression of all righteous laws.

If such reasoning is sound ; and it seems to be irrefragable—then intelligence and integrity are indispensable to republican safety and growth, and, of course, ignorance and immorality are dangerous. If then, on the one hand we compel the property of the State under penal forfeitures, to support schools which tend to secure the intellectual and moral culture that are absolutely necessary to political and social safety ; on the other hand, are not the community, who

have thus compulsorily established and sustained agencies to secure the mental and moral culture of all, equally bound to compel, in some way, that general participation in the benefits thus proffered, which shall drive from it that ignorance and immorality which alone can make and do make possible that demagogism which is the ever-present danger of republics? Had the New England privileges of church and school, been equally available to all the people of the United States, the late terrible Rebellion would have been impossible.

In the light of such reasoning, the question has often presented itself, and it will continue to come again and again, and will demand an answer; whether the State of Vermont can safely tolerate forever, an average absence from school of one-half of the children within her borders.

And it will year after year remain the duty of your official agent, in the annual report, to continue annually to urge this most important subject upon the attention of the Legislature and the People, till some practical measures are inaugurated that give promise of amendment. What must be the character of any such measures of relief is a practical question, the solution of which will require great judgment and caution. The extracts from the laws of Massachusetts exhibit one method of solution, and it is perhaps the best practical solution, now in actual use. The Constitution excludes from participation in the right of suffrage, those who wilfully remain in ignorance; and its laws give power to each town to declare truancy to be an evil full of danger, and to punish it as such. Certainly, these methods are well worthy of deliberate consideration.

It is worthy of thought, likewise, whether as the common schools are free to all, it might not be practicable to empower the Prudential Committees, on application to furnish all the necessary books to those children who are unable from poverty to provide themselves, at the expense of the district, and then as all means, at least of elementary culture, will be gratuitously provided for all, assess an annual tax of one dollar for the support of schools in each district, upon each child within certain ages, from which tax they shall be relieved on presenting a certificate of attendance upon the schools for a given number of months.

The whole subject is commended to the best thought of all friends of education and of the State.

GRADED SCHOOLS.

The subject of Graded Schools has been very constantly held before the public mind at the educational meetings of all kinds during the year, and as their capacity and their easy adaptation to the educational wants of the whole State have become understood, they have been continually gaining ground in the favorable opinion of community. Within the past year several of the larger towns

the State have gone heartily into movements for the establishment of public Graded Schools, in place of existing Academies. Many of the smaller towns are taking the preliminary steps to follow in the same direction.

Several obstacles have hitherto operated, and to some extent do still tend, to retard the general movement in the State, to which it is proper to call attention here.

A great hindrance to the adoption of the Graded School system in many of the smaller towns, is found in a very prevalent notion, that, as the larger towns, in adopting the system, have erected quite expensive school houses, and, collecting all the children of the town into one building, have thus expended very large sums of money, therefore, a very dense population, and a very large amount of property subject to taxation are indispensable to the adoption of a kind of schools which seem to be so very expensive. Hence there exists and will for a long time be found, a necessity for continual explanation before the public mind in order to dissipate a notion which has been as powerful in preventing the adoption of these schools as it is unfounded in the theory of such schools. An examination and explanation of the Graded School system of the State, will convince every mind that, although they do afford an opportunity under certain circumstances for expenditures of money to a large amount, yet such expenditures are by no means necessary. The term "Graded Schools," under our laws, is a very general one, and includes, as well the schools formed in any single district by a division of its scholars between two or more departments, graded with reference to each other, as the graded schools which include within their scope the minor population of a whole town or city.

It is a chief excellence in our system that the adoption of a higher grade than the common ungraded school is not made compulsory under any circumstances, and the character of the schools is not fixed and made unvarying by law. Therefore, depending for their character entirely upon the wish of the community, as expressed by vote, they may at all times be made to assume the precise form and proportion which exactly adapts them to the wants of any particular locality. They may thus become quite expensive, or they may be confined within very prescribed limits, and thus meet, at any time, the existing educational needs of the locality. It needs to be more generally understood, that the graded schools, instead of being unusually expensive of necessity, are, when properly constituted and managed, the most economical schools known, in reality accomplishing, not only better work, but also more work in a given time and at less expense, than any other schools.

The more general adoption of graded schools has also been delayed, by the prevalence of the idea that special legislation is needed for each particular locality. The fact that, in several of the large towns in

the State, resort has been had to special legislation, in order to secure some particular privilege, or retain some existing fund that would otherwise be lost, has tended to produce the impression referred to. But in truth the general law of the State, empowering each district or each consolidation of districts, to construct its own school or system of schools, is in its operation better adapted to secure good schools than any special legislation is likely to be. And so long as each community may compel the property of its citizens to support entirely such schools as they may choose to establish, no great ingenuity or care need be expended in retaining some little special fund.

Much attention in various localities has of late been given to the consolidation of districts as preliminary to the adoption of some system of higher schools. The existing practice of basing the division into districts exclusively upon territorial considerations, has caused so great an inequality of taxation in order to the support of schools, that the public mind is beginning to be thoroughly aroused. It is exceeding strange that, with the strong democratic proclivities of the people of our State, they should so long have submitted to an administration of our school laws, that compels one man to pay out four, six, and in some cases ten times as much as a neighbor in an adjoining district, for a given quantity of school instruction of the same character. The people are just beginning to appreciate a fact that has often been presented in the Annual Reports without exciting much attention, viz : that if District A has a grand list of \$400 while District B has one of \$4,000, it will be found that in order to raise \$100 for school purposes a tax-payer in the first district must pay ten times as much in the way of taxes, as he would be compelled to pay did he reside in the second district. The injustice and inequality thus involved are operating strongly in inducing a favorable opinion of the consolidation of districts. The policy of consolidation upon grounds of economy as well as justice is beginning to be perceived. In his official return, Rev. C. E. Ferrin, the Superintendent of Hinesburgh, a very judicious and efficient officer, says :

"If a district has graded schools, and these schools are not co-terminous, or of equal length, may they not make the average attendance for each separate, and then add these averages for the averages of the district ?

"The defraying of all the expenses of the schools, including fuel, board of teachers, &c., has so swelled the school taxes, that the inequality of the taxes in the different districts becomes more apparent, and the people begin to inquire if these burdens cannot be made equal. The most wealthy agricultural districts are likely to have the smaller number of scholars, and can get along with a less expensive school. In some districts a tax of ten per cent. will suffice, while in others, the tax must be as high as forty per cent.

"The people are discussing the plan of making the whole town into one district, and have the schools on the graded system, with a high school at the centre. If we attempt this, can you suggest a plan to equalize the property now owned by the several districts? Is there a better plan than this? Appoint commissioners to appraise the property of each district; then out of the assessed tax deduct for each district ten per cent. of the value of its property, distributing it pro rata among all the tax-payers of the district. Let this be done for ten years, and then each district and each tax-payer will have received a consideration equal to the value of their interest in the school district property."

In one or more towns, during the past year, movements have been taken looking towards municipal action by towns, which should abolish all divisions into districts, and out of all the districts in town, by consolidation form a single district. In every case, I think, the movement has been suspended, because it was supposed that special legislation would be necessary to enable a town either to unite in one all of its districts, or to make distribution of the value of the property of each district.

Under the General School Law of this State, towns are invested with plenary and exclusive power to control the whole matter of district divisions. They may make out of the territory of the town few or many districts. They may change the limits of any, may divide any one, or unite any two, and may re-divide the territory at any time. There can be little doubt then, that whatever the law, and a practice uniform for many years, has allowed towns to do with reference to one or two districts, may as well be done with regard to all. Towns must have power to consolidate all their districts if they choose.

And the proposition in regard to what disposition must be made of the property of each school district does not seem very difficult. Districts, as such, alone have or can have any control over the school property of such districts, so long as they retain and sustain their district organizations. Towns have never, under the laws, presumed to meddle or interfere with district action in regard to the district property. A town may unite two school districts, but it never will undertake to dictate, either to the individual districts or the joint corporation that results from the union in reference to the district property, and for the simple reason that district property does not belong to, or come within the control of the town. If then a town were to consolidate all of its schools districts into one, it would seem that, although the voters of the town would thus all become voters in the school meeting of the resulting joint district, still any disposition of the school property of either of the districts must be by vote in school meeting, and not in town meeting. In other words, all responsibilities of each individual district would

devolve upon or attach to the joint or consolidated districts, and all district property by the act of consolidation would become the property of the consolidated district, to be disposed of in its discretion.

No necessity for special legislation is apparent, and yet a general enactment empowering towns to consolidate all their school districts and fixing the rule for the distribution of the district property, would save possible questions in the future, and quiet many present doubts. In an actual case that came within my knowledge for advice during the past year, I suggested that all district property be appraised at its cash value by three disinterested, non-resident citizens, and credited in each district pro rata upon the grand list to each tax-payer, that the value of the district property be added to the amount necessary to provide school houses for the consolidated district, and taxes assessed for the same, and then that each tax-payer's share of the property be credited to him on the account for taxes.

The entire abolition of the district system and the disposition of district property is provided for in one of our sister States as follows :

"A town may at any time, abolish the school districts therein, and shall thereupon forthwith take possession of all the school houses, lands, appurtenances and other property owned and used for school purposes, which such district might lawfully sell and convey—the property so taken shall be appraised under the direction of the town, and at the next annual assessment thereafter, a tax shall be levied upon the whole town equal to the amount of said appraisal ; and there shall be remitted to the tax-payers of each district, the said appraised value of its property thus taken. Or the difference in the value of the property of the several districts may be adjusted in any other manner agreed upon by the parties in interest."

But the discussion of this important topic cannot well be continued now.

A STATE SYSTEM OF NORMAL SCHOOLS.

On no point in the whole field of educational thought and labor has there been so unanimous a concurrence of opinion, among the truest and best friends of education, as in reference to the indispensable necessity of some adequate provision for the professional teaching and training of teachers, in order to a State system of education that shall approximate to completeness. This is not only generally true of the country at large, but has, within the last few years, become eminently true of our own State.

For several years now, this, as an existing necessity, has had prominent position among the topics of oral and written discussion

in all gathering of the especial friends of good schools, and has been continually presented in the annual official returns of the Town Superintendents, as will appear from an inspection of quotations therefrom in the Annual Reports. The sentiment favorable to such provisions has become so general that I do not propose to discuss the necessity and propriety of meeting this universally acknowledged want of the State at this time. Such discussion is believed to be unnecessary. So very general and so strong has been the movement of public sentiment in this direction that nearly every one of the Northern States now has some State system of Normal instruction. Vermont stands almost alone in her utter destitution of the means of Normal training's and the time seems fully come when this whole subject should be fairly considered.

Two leading methods of securing Normal instruction have been tried by the various States. One method, now partially in use in the State of New York, is to select, from existing Academies, a limited number which shall be publicly designated by State authority, shall receive an appropriation from the State funds and shall give instruction to a certain number of the teachers upon fixed and easy terms, but are not required to give exclusive attention to such course of instruction. In practice, I believe it to be generally found, when this method has been adopted, that the Normal training of teachers is, in the Academies selected, considered rather subordinate and inferior to the true Academic sphere of labor, and of necessity the quality of instruction given is also inferior, and thus the system has, as it needs must have done, failed measurably in accomplishing its object. Experience has not commanded this plan.

Another, and the more common method, now in almost universal use, consists in the establishment and support, by the State, of State Normal Schools, exclusively for the purpose of thoroughly teaching and training the teachers of the public schools. Many of these State Normal Schools are now to be found, and are doing very perfect work. Two practical objections exist to this last plan, not to mention others. There are first, the great expense necessarily involved, and second, the evident inadequacy of any such possible system to provide a sufficient supply of trained teachers. These objections are exemplified by the four Normal Schools of Massachusetts, which stand confessedly among the very best known schools of this description. The four schools supply in each year probably less than two hundred graduates at an expense to the State of upwards of \$130, each—and the number of different teachers employed in that State, by the last Report being 7,367, the whole number of graduates would constitute a small fraction over 2 1-2 per cent.

I have never hitherto urged this very important topic in the Re-

ports, because in the first place the public mind did not seem prepared for it, and in the second place, while one of the only two prevalent systems of Normal training failed in practical operation to vindicate its own sufficiency, the other was so expensive as, in the existing state of public opinion in this State, to make its rejection sure. And while Secretary I have never urged any project that I did not think was entirely worthy of adoption, and was also likely to be adopted.

Knowing the desirability of securing the necessary Normal training by the adoption of some method, and well knowing that the matter would soon present itself and imperatively demand our action, I have been waiting rather in hope that in expectation, that some measurably sufficient and yet comparatively inexpensive method of meeting this great and known want might be discovered.

I take therefore the sincerest pleasure in being able to inform your Honorable Board, that, at last, the way seems open for the inauguration and establishment, in all probability of an efficient system of State Normal instruction, that shall not be objectionable on account of expense, and that will give, in proportion as it shall be extended, the special training needed for our teachers, and at the same time accomplish a good educational work in another direction.

I have received a written proposition from the Trustees of one of the oldest and one of the best existing Academies, offering to the State the use of their school building, apparatus and appurtenances for the carrying on of a Normal School, under certain conditions which are specified in the proposition.

The following is a copy of the offer referred to:—

A plan for bringing the Orange County Grammar School under the supervision and patronage of the State, as a State Normal School.

The Trustees of the Orange County Grammar School will grant the use of their school property to the State for a Normal School on the conditions following:—

1st. The Trustees of the school will retain the control of all their school property, and the right to determine the rate of tuition.

2nd. The Trustees will ask the Board of Education to nominate a principal teacher for the school, and will pledge themselves to employ, as principal, no person not so nominated by the Board of Education.

3rd. The Principal shall be allowed to select his assistant teachers and to provide for the discipline of the school.

4th. The Trustees will allow the Board of Education to arrange the course of study for the school, and wholly to control the examinations for admission to the courses, and for graduation from them,

and the giving of certificates. Provided that there shall be established a course of study including all the branches required by law to be taught in the common schools of Vermont, and a course of higher studies requiring at least one full year for its completion, and that certificates of graduation be granted to all who have passed the required examinations in either course, but none shall be examined for graduation in the higher course, till they have passed all the examinations of the lower course.

5th. The certificates of graduation from the first course shall be constituted licenses to teach in any common school in the State for five years from the date thereof; and certificates of graduation from the higher course shall be constituted perpetual licenses to teach in the common schools of Vermont.

6th. Persons presenting themselves for that purpose at any regular examination for graduation, may, on payment of a reasonable fee, be examined in the studies of the first course, or of both courses; and, in case of passing a satisfactory examination, shall be entitled to a certificate of that fact, which certificates shall have the same effect as those before described.

7th. The Trustees will demand that the Board of Education, by some of its members, or by visitors duly appointed by them, attend the examinations for graduation and determine who shall receive certificates, and also visit and examine the school at least twice a year on other occasions.

8th. The Trustees will demand that the Board of Education publish annually a report of the school, its condition and workings, the time of commencing terms and the requirements for admission.

9th. The Trustees will pledge themselves to keep the buildings occupied by the school in good repair.

Such is the proposition that has been made, and it affords a most desirable opportunity for the State to make, and at very little expense to itself, an experimental trial in the prosecution of an object that must very soon receive attention. If the proposition be not accepted, the time is now close at hand when, in obedience to the voice of a public sentiment already in existence, and rapidly taking form, the State will be compelled by a widely prevalent appreciation of its necessity, to adopt and sustain some system of State Normal Instruction, and whatever may be its character, it must at first be very much in the nature of an experiment, and that a very costly one. To organize an independent Normal School with the necessary buildings, equipments, teachers and grounds, and carry it on for a single year can scarcely cost, at the least, less than \$25,000. But here is an opportunity to step into the immediate use of all the paraphernalia of a well-appointed Normal School, and this, as it may be said, without any expense at all.

It is not improper to say here, that the Orange County Grammar School is located at Randolph, has an excellent school building, well situated and nearly new, in a quiet and high-toned community; and has for several years been under the direction of Mr. Edward Conant, one of our most thoughtful and successful teachers, who is himself personally acquainted with the capacities as well as the deficiencies of State Normal Schools as conducted elsewhere. Mr. Conant has given his life to teaching, and mainly in this State, and is not only heartily engaged in this movement, but has been actively instrumental in effecting the presentation of this proposition.

As I have before observed, in other States the effort has already been made to engraft upon, or add to, the established course of study in the academies already fully engaged in carrying on their own appropriate work, a course of normal training for teachers. But in every instance the experiment, however promising at first, has resulted in failure. It is hardly possible that anything but failure should come from an effort to conjoin two courses of study so different in their nature and in the objects aimed at, as are a course of academic and ornamental training, and a course of thorough normal discipline. It will be noticed that the plan presented proposes no such unnatural or impossible junction; neither does it contemplate the subordination or subjection of the normal to the academic course, but it proposes to make the thorough education and training of teachers its sole and exclusive object; as fully so as is done in the normal schools of any State.

It has often been urged in these reports that the multiplicity of academies, so called, in this State has constituted one of the most serious obstacles in the way of a general and progressive improvement of the common schools. Assuming to teach, literally every thing, from the branches that belong especially to the infant school to those that occupy the highest place in a proper academic course, they have signally failed in many cases to do well any portion of their attempted work, but have served to divert public attention from the common schools, and depriving them of their share of the public interest, have very seriously injured them.

This subject was presented to the friends of education at a meeting of the State Teacher's Association a few years since, by Mr. J. K. Colby of St. Johnsbury, one of the most experienced and successful teachers of Vermont academies, and a man remarkable for caution and judgment. Rather than to comment on the topic I prefer to re-produce the Essay of Mr. Colby. He has been recently taken from us, and has gone to his reward. His memory and his words will ever be his best monument:

VERMONT ACADEMIES.

AN ESSAY BY J. K. COLLY.

At the last annual meeting of this Association, a year ago, the following resolution was referred to the Executive Committee, with instructions to provide for its consideration during the sessions of the present meeting :

Resolved, That our Academies would more effectually serve the cause of education by insisting that all persons admitted as scholars shall have made definite acquisitions, and by ascertaining the fact by actual examination.

In compliance with the request of this committee, I am to furnish a brief introduction to the discussion of this resolution, and in so doing it is not my purpose, as time will not permit, to present the various considerations that might be offered *for*, or *against*, its propositions, but leaving that to others, I shall merely indicate a few things respecting the condition and relations of these schools, that must necessarily be taken into the account, in estimating the *utility*, and especially the *practicability* of the measure in question.

The academies in Vermont, more numerous, and better patronized it is confidently believed, in proportion to our wealth and population, than similar institutions in any other State of the Union which, at the same time supports a system of common school education, furnish not only a gratifying proof of the existence among us of a generous and high appreciation of popular education, but at the same time a no less manifest proof of *indifference* to, and neglect of, the obvious and necessary means required to make such education either economical or universal.

No one familiar with our educational affairs during the last twenty-five years, can have failed to notice the rapid multiplication of academies and private schools in all parts of the State ; until, in place of a single *Grammar School* for each County, with here and there a similar school established through the liberality of some wealthy friends of education, we have now in every important village an incorporated academy, and in almost every *unimportant* village, either an incorporated academy or an intermittent select school. A large majority of these, as a necessary means of procuring support, are opened to scholars of all ages and grades of proficiency. In their advertisements soliciting public favor, they propose to give instruction in almost every department of learning, from the studies of the primary school up to and *through* the whole range of subjects embraced in a liberal education.

Now whatever may have been the occasion of the multiplication of academies, whatever the real or imagined inadequacy of common schools to meet the wants of the common people, that has prompted them, in this way, to supplement the deficiency, or whether, as is doubtless true, the fact has other and a variety of causes, one thing

is especially obvious, that these academies, and our private schools generally, are not in harmony and effective co-operation with our other educational institutions, either those above, or those below them.

I wish not, however, to be understood as attributing this want of harmony and co-operation to any fault or agency of either the trustees or teachers of these intermediate schools; I speak of it as a fact necessarily incidental to our hitherto ill-adjusted, or rather un-adjusted, modes of education in Vermont.

As has been already said, for the purpose of securing the patronage essential to their subsistence, and oftentimes, also, for accomplishing the main object for which they were created, they receive scholars of all ages and grades of attainment. Not unfrequently the larger portion of the scholars found in some of them during the winter and summer terms, and in others during all terms, are qualified to pursue nothing beyond the elementary studies of the district schools; and while in as far as they train them in these branches, and *train them well*, they deserve well of their patrons and those entrusted to their care, yet, inasmuch as in so doing they not unfrequently withdraw from the common schools the *material and influence essential* to its respectability and efficiency throughout an entire community, they so far *hinder*, rather than help, the cause of general education. Hence, not unfrequently, in some of our large villages where academies have been located, there have been found, and, I presume, may still be found, *some of the very poorest specimens of the common school*; and perhaps it is true, as has been sometimes alleged, that the comparatively cheap facilities which the academies of Vermont furnish for the education of the children of the more wealthy and influential portion of the community, constitute one of the prominent obstacles to the improvement of our common schools.

It is not, however, in this way *only*, or perhaps *chiefly*, that the academy fails to co-operate with the lower grade of schools in the work of general education, and especially in promoting that kind and degree of education most needed in the every-day business of life.

For while, as has just been said, the academies open their doors to a large class of scholars qualified to prosecute nothing beyond the common branches taught in the lower grade of schools, they neither intend, nor are able to give these primary studies *any prominent or permanent* place in their teaching. A natural tendency to work in their appropriate sphere—a necessity also of classification, that must ultimately bring together scholars of various ages and attainments—and more than all, the ambition of scholars to be in advanced classes, prevent the adaptation of studies to the wants of this class of students; and hence, however good the instruction

may be for those qualified to receive it, *they* profit little by it. The majority of them, however, seldom fail to acquire *an intense conviction*, (as I apprehend most teachers can testify), that having been two or three terms at the academy they must never degrade themselves by returning to the dull and vulgar studies of the common school.

Now it is just here, if we mistake not, that our academies become, unintentionally, a fruitful source of injury to the common school. For it is to be remembered that a large number of those scholars that swell the attendance at our academies during the Spring and Fall, return to the district school for the Winter term.

They naturally wish to prosecute the studies commenced at these higher schools, and constituting generally the *more intelligent, interesting* and *apparently* the more important part of the teacher's charge, they seldom fail to procure the introduction of the studies and text-books of the academies into the district school. These studies, once introduced, in various ways which need not here be enumerated, soon engross the larger share of the time devoted to recitation and illustration, and by degrees, through neglect, the *elementary branches*, such as *Reading, Spelling, Writing, and similar branches*, lose their respectability and importance in the estimation of the school; and very soon it happens, that scarcely any one's children, either in their own or their parents' estimation, need any further instruction in these things. In this way the academy has been gradually modifying the character and diminishing the usefulness of the common school. It has diverted from the study of the primary branches, the *fundamental and essential branches* of every scholar's education, a large portion of our youth who have hitherto received no careful training in them. The result is, that large numbers of our youth, wholly dependent on the common schools for their education, are failing to acquire in it ability to *read, write and spell*, sufficient to save them from pity or ridicule, whenever their proficiency, or rather their deficiency in them is put upon exhibition. And yet these same scholars may often be found studying, or attempting to study, Natural Philosophy, Physiology, Algebra, or whatever happens to be taught in the academy or select school.

I do not wish to be understood as objecting to the introduction of these or any other class of studies into the common schools, so fast and so far as the actual wants and capacities of the scholars attending them require; but when, as it frequently happens, a majority of those prosecuting these higher studies in the common school are found incapable of reading *decently*, of spelling *correctly* a large portion of the words used in the daily intercourse of the family or school-room, or composing properly and writing legibly the ordinary communications of business and friendship required in the current

transactions of every-day life, their course of study—to say the least of it—seems to be ill-suited to qualify them to meet the demands which the future will necessarily make upon them.

So far the relation of our academies to the common school. It was my purpose to say something upon their relation and connexion with the colleges above them, but time will only permit me to add, in addressing those especially who like myself labor in these high schools, that in the performance of that specific work, entrusted almost wholly to us—the *preparation of students for the college course*—we fail to come up to the standard which we ought to attain; and in saying this I speak from a consciousness of my own, rather than from knowledge of others' deficiencies in this particular. If they are exempt from the same, I heartily congratulate them upon their more comfortable condition. Something, however, may, and ought to be said, to excuse our academies for their imperfect work in this direction; for "Non omnes omnia possunt"—"A Jack at all trades is good at none," which should mean, when applied to teachers in our academies, that if they be required to teach *everything* in some shape, they ought not to be expected to teach *anything* very well.

The resolution, before us, if I understand its intent, was designed to call attention and suggest, if possible, some remedy for this ill-adjusted or rather unadjusted distribution of labor between higher and lower grades of schools. And in discussing it, two questions present themselves. 1st, Would the measure proposed be useful? And 2d, Is it practicable?

In estimating its utility we must take into account its influence both upon the academy and the common schools. That it would greatly simplify the quality and efficiency of the teachers' labors in our academies there can be no doubt. Whatever tends to facilitate classification upon the basis of attainments and thereby reduce the number of topics upon which he must give instruction, and especially when, as at the present time, these are so numerous that few teachers can make more than a superficial acquaintance with most of them, will at the same time tend to elevate the standard of academical education.

Its influence upon the Common School would in the end, no doubt, prove beneficial also. This, however, we predicate upon the supposition that the standard of attainments to be required for admission to the Academy shall be one embracing specific and thorough discipline in the elementary studies usually prescribed as the sphere of teaching in the Common Schools. It would tend, by the temporary exclusion of a class of scholars from the Academy, to concentrate the efforts of all classes upon the improvement of the Common

Schools, and this, if we mistake not, is the mainspring of efficiency which this institution in Vermont needs at the present time.

But, admitting the *utility* of the measure, is it *practicable*? I apprehend not—certainly, not immediately; nor ultimately except to a very limited extent. Four-fifths, at least, of all our Academies in Vermont are destitute of funds and rely wholly upon tuition for support. Their teachers have only a temporary interest in them. They are generally graduates of Colleges—candidates for one of the learned professions who find it convenient or necessary to replenish their scanty resources by one or two years service wherever honorable and useful employment promises to give them the largest compensation. They could hardly be expected to undertake the application of any such rule of admission to these schools as would defeat the immediate object sought in their connexion with them. A very limited number of our Academies, however, might safely institute such a rule of admission. Having other resources than tuition for present support, they could survive its immediate results and live both to elevate the standard of academical education and reap an ample reward for whatever pecuniary sacrifice the experiment in its first results might cost them. Upon them the undertaking must be devolved.

I trust that no one will infer from what has been said, that I am disposed to disparage the general character of the Common Schools and Academies of our State. Notwithstanding these many deficiencies, the Academies of Vermont will not, I am confident, suffer in a comparison to-day with those of any other State. They are too many in number, and like the Colleges above them, they stand in the way of each other's usefulness and elevation—and if any expedient can be devised by which half the number of both could be extinguished and their endowments and patronage concentrated upon the rest, "it were a consummation devoutly to be wished," as promising more for the interest of education in the State than any other obvious, practicable measure whatever.

Such words of truth and soberness from one whose character and experience enabled him to know the truth of what he said, are well worthy of serious considerations.

Few as yet have ever fully appreciated the extent to which this State has suffered from the multiplication of her Academies. Graduating annually, in all probability, from all the colleges which her young men attended, less than half a hundred, at one time eighty-two Academies were reported in our Statistical returns. And while, in her last report the State of Massachusetts reports fifty-nine Academies. Vermont in the last year reports sixty-six.

No intelligent friend of education in our State doubts or can doubt but that as Mr. Colby says, "If any expedient can be devised,

"by which half the number could be extinguished, and their endowments and patronage concentrated upon the rest," good effects to the general cause of education would result.

The number of these Academies has already been diminished in this State in a few years twenty-five per cent. by the substitution for them in various localities of Graded Schools.

Now if the proposition to change one of the best of the remaining Academies into a true Normal School is accepted, under appropriate legislation, and the plan, upon trial, succeeds, then another and another can be changed, till in every one of the Counties in the State will be fairly supplied with a most necessary agency in her educational field.

A very natural inquiry will suggest itself, in connection with the proposition made, as to what compensation on Academy, thus yielding the use of its property to the State without any pecuniary appropriation in return, can hope to receive. The answer to this is to be found, in the fact that, in return for the proposed change, the power to bestow upon the graduates diplomas that will avail as certificates for teachers running five years or perpetually, is expected to operate as a sufficient inducement to attract large numbers of the thoughtful and studious who may intend to become professional teachers, and by their certificates will be relieved from the annoyance of yearly examinations.

This proposition is not based upon an entirely novel idea, for the consummation of some such plan has been in constant contemplation for several years, and it is with no ordinary pleasure that I commend the plan most heartily and hopefully to the attention and approval of your Honorable Board.

THE AUTHORIZED LIST OF BOOKS.

Another topic that will commend itself to the early and earnest attention of the Board is that of the authorized list of school text books. Upon the organization of the Board in 1856 it was found that an almost incredible diversity of school books, was causing a good deal of embarrassment in the practical working of the system. This diversity was greatly and unnecessarily increasing the number of classes in the schools, and thus diminishing their efficiency and, at the same time, it was causing to parents a great and useless expense. There was no existing authority whose duty it was to direct or control the selection of books. Each Superintendent and each teacher advised the use of such books as pleased him, and the schools were filled with specimens of all the school books extant, and all greatly to the detriment of the schools and to the pecuniary loss of the tax-payers.

After a protracted discussion of the matter before the public, in

the year 1858, by act of the Legislature the Board of Education was authorized and directed to make a selection of school books and publish the same, and it was provided that when such list should be selected and published, it should thereupon become authoritative and binding; and no other books than those thus selected could legally be recommended for use in the schools by teachers or Superintendents or the Board.

The Board proceeded to make the selection thus required and from the 12th of January, 1859, to the present time, the list thus selected has retained its place in our schools, and as a result, quite a general uniformity of books has prevailed.

This authorization to make a selection of books met with great opposition, and after the selection was made, it encountered a very bitter hostility for many months, but in a year or two it was not only quietly acquiesced in, but received from all parts of the State very favorable consideration. So true was this, that at the session of 1863, the time during which the authorized list of books was to be binding, was without a word of opposition extended to January 1, 1867. And, after it had gone into successful operation, it attracted the attention of the friends of education elsewhere, and several attempts to secure similar legislation were made in other States.

The time limited therein for the termination of the binding force of this law will expire on the first day of January, 1867, now close at hand, and unless some legislative action is had at the approaching session, we shall of necessity be forced back to the condition of indescribable confusion in school books which existed before the establishment of the authorized selection of books.

There is quite a general sentiment, especially among the teachers, in favor of a thorough revision of the authorized list. While many of the text books selected have given satisfaction, some of them are much disliked. And this is not to be wondered at when we consider the circumstances under which the selection was made. Similar attempts to establish an authoritative list had failed in other States where they had been frequently made; and the Board were disposed to proceed with great caution. In reference to several text books that were found to have been extensively introduced into the schools, the Board determined to include them in the list which was to be the first list of the kind established in the State, with little reference to their intrinsic worth, and mainly on the ground that any change of these books would cause an expense that would more than countervail any possible benefit that could result therefrom.

All of the books mentioned in the authorized list have now been in use in the schools for eight years, and some of them for a much longer time.

Within the last few years, numerous and valuable improvements have been introduced into the school books used in connection with all of the studies required in the schools; and an opportunity is now offered to make a selection of school books that shall rest entirely upon the real merits of the books. There is within my own knowledge and within the knowledge of members of the Board, a very strong desire on the part of very many of our best teachers that a new selection should be made in the books relating to one or two of the leading branches of study.

So great is the dissatisfaction with some of these books, on the part of many teachers, that unless a change of the list shall bring some relief there is great danger of a general and increasing disregard of the law.

I may be allowed to express an earnest hope that the influence of your Honorable Board may be exerted to secure the revision of the authorized list of books, by the passage of the necessary enactments at the approaching session of the Legislature.

BRANCHES NOT REQUIRED IN THE SCHOOLS.

It is worthy of notice that, while in other States, the established courses of study have been from time to time enlarged in their scope, and variously extended, to meet the constantly increasing educational demands of the prevalent public sentiment; in our own State, the requirements of the law have remained unchanged, with one exception, for more than half a century. A few years since a change was made in the general law by which instruction was required in the Geography, History and Constitution of our State. Now while the rudiments of a common school culture, with whatever changes of method, must remain essentially the same in character for many years, it requires little consideration to convince any fair mind that no school system can adapt itself to the changing and growing wants of the communities for whose benefit it is established, without occasional and progressive enlargements of its scope, and proportionate additions to its course of studies.

An examination will show that several topics which have prominent positions in the list of subjects in which instruction is required by law in other States are not mentioned at all among the legal requirements of our State school law. The enlargement of the scope of our common schools by adding somewhat to the list of branches in which instruction shall be given and thus imperatively requiring instruction in those topics that are thus added, or by allowing instruction in them under certain conditions, would do much to disarm certain objections to the practical working of our schools.

The exclusion of Physical Geography, Music, Drawing, Physiol-

ogy, Composition and Book-keeping from the legal list of topics of instruction in the public schools, has often been cited as sufficient inducement, in order to supply the deficiencies of the public schools, for the establishment and support of a multitude of private and select schools that, by diverting from the public schools the interest and the patronage of influential men, have much obstructed and retarded the improvement of the appliances and agencies of popular education.

Again, it is often alleged, in derogation of the character of our public schools, that the different branches are taught in such a lifeless and ineffectual manner, and with such remote reference to the realization of any immediate and practical benefit therefrom, that many a child spends the whole of his school life in the diligent and apparently successful pursuit of the so-called common branches and yet his Geography gives him little knowledge of his own country or of the world at large, that is beneficial in the way of expansion or improvement; his English Grammar gives him no ability to write or speak his native tongue, that is of actual service to him; and having mastered the arithmetical text-book, he remains as before incompetent to understand, without further instruction, or take part in the most common business operations.

There can be little doubt that if all the common and graded schools were required to give instruction in Book-keeping and Physical Geography and in Composition, much more of practical benefit would result from their efforts. And if by a change of law all the public schools, of every grade, were required, whenever the District so order by vote, to furnish adequate instruction in Vocal Music, Physiology and Drawing, the chief ground manifested for the preference of private and select schools would be taken away.

It may be remarked also, in regard to the topics last named, that properly used they may be made to exert a powerful influence upon our schools, in a direction where such influence is very greatly needed.

Whatever agency can be brought to bear upon the schools of the State, that will have a tendency to elevate, purify and refine the character of the children who attend them, must in the opinion of those who are best acquainted with the tendencies of school life, be of inestimable value. Many of the evil traits of character exhibited by school children, result as frequently from the utter neglect of teachers and parents to induce good habits of thought and to inspire with pure and noble feelings, as they do from the natural proclivities to wrong and vicious courses of which all careless and unruly children are suspected. But let Physical Geography throw an attractive hue over the study of Geography as commonly pursued, by turning the attention of children towards the ingenuity,

the majesty and the exquisitely beautiful adaptation, exhibited in the co-operating agencies of the winds and waters, the mountains and valleys; the rocks and the deserts, and in the varieties of animal and vegetable life, and you gain a power to speak to the souls that have never before been roused, that can be made almost to transform the very natures of those brought under such influences. How many careless and idle and vicious boys grow up into useless, harsh and vicious men from being neglected in early years in regard to a right cultivation of the heart as well as the head.

The future of the adult depends vastly more upon the tastes that are fostered or neglected in early years; and many a man is hard and harsh, and with no susceptibility to the refining and softening agencies of life, simply because the finer and softer capabilities of his nature have been allowed to slumber through all the days of his boyhood.

The cultivation and development in early life of those capacities and tastes, that will in their very developement as well directly promote individual and general happiness as they will guard against the more common sources of unhappiness, by giving a capacity to secure the highest pleasure in the quiet pursuits and enjoyments of the home circle, is a subject of the highest conceivable importance.

Why not then, in the common school, let Music and Drawing be allowed a fair chance to contend with roughness, coarseness and profanity in obtaining a permanent and formative power over the characters of the children of our State?

It is a fortunate thing, that if, as is so often said, we are all the creatures of habit, the statement is as true of good habits as it is of bad ones. Many a hard boy loves to indulge in vulgar and profane language and to lounge his days and nights away in all accessible idling places, because no one ever taught him otherwise. A boy who loves to sing will be less likely to swear, and one who can find a true and quiet pleasure in the exercise of his natural appreciation of the beautiful in nature and art by developing his faculty for drawing in his own quiet and pleasant home will waste little time in the streets or the groceries.

I most earnestly hope that a modification of our laws will enable the schools to enlist all the power that Music and Drawing, and other similar agencies, may have in softening and purifying the character of the pupils in our schools.

MODIFICATIONS OF LAW RECOMMENDED.

I recommend that the influence of your Honorable Board be exerted to procure the following changes of law:

1st. That the Board of Education be legally empowered, in their discretion,, from time to time to accept propositions from the Trustees of existing Academies, similar to the proposition of the Trustees of the Orange County Grammar School, embodied in the present Report, by which the gratuitous use of their school property may be secured for the State for a term of not less than five years, and that such schools shall be adopted as State Normal Schools and to grant licenses to teach in the schools of the State for five years or more to those who shall graduate from such schools, providing that the number of schools thus selected shall not exceed six, and providing also that the special licences thus granted shall be liable to revocation by the Board for the same causes assigned in the general laws for the revocation of ordinary certificates to teachers.

2d. That Physical Geography, Literary Composition, and Book-keeping be added to the topics specified in the general law, in which instruction shall be required in all the common schools.

3d. That Vocal Music, Physiology and Drawing be taught in all the public schools of every grade, whenever the Prudential Committee, or the District by vote, shall so direct.

4th. That the Board of Education be empowered and directed to revise the existing authorized list of school books, and to make and publish an authorized list of text-books to be used in all the public schools, in giving instruction in all the branches of study required by law in the schools, such list to be made under the same provisions which governed in making the existing list, and to be of binding force for ten years from the time of its publication.

5th. That so much of the public money as is now by law distributed in proportion to the average daily attendance of the scholars, be distributed in proportion to the aggregate attendance.

6th. That any town, at a town meeting legally warned for that purpose, may by a majority vote direct the abolition of all the school districts therein, and establish a method of disposition of existing school property.

7th. That all Prudential Committees of Districts, except in Union Districts, shall consist of three persons, to be elected at the next annual school meeting for one, two, or three years respectively, and thereafter, one member of such committee to be elected annually and to hold office for three years.

8th. That the law be so amended that no District shall receive any share of the public money, unless there shall, during the year next preceding the distribution thereof, have been kept in such District a school for the term of four months sustained by other moneys than those which may have been drawn from the town treasury.

And now I trust I may be allowed, in closing this report, to express an earnest hope that the present educational year, already marked by the complete organization of the State Agricultural College, and the State Reform School, under the most favorable auspices, may, by necessary legislation and your action, become still more memorable as the year in which a judicious, economical and adequate system of State Normal Instruction shall have been inaugurated.

Respectfully submitted,

J. S. ADAMS, Secretary.

ELEVENTH
ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
VERMONT BOARD OF EDUCATION,
WITH THE
REPORT OF THE SECRETARY
MADE TO THE BOARD
SEPTEMBER, 1867.

BURLINGTON:
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1867.



REPORT OF THE BOARD.

To the Honorable the Legislature of the State of Vermont:

GENTLEMEN :

In conformity to law, the Board of Education herewith submit their Eleventh Annual Report.

By several laws enacted by the Legislature of 1866, an unusual amount and variety of duties were required of the Board, to an account of the performance of which duties this Report is principally devoted.

One of those laws required the Board to arrange two courses of study, one of them including all the branches required to be taught in the Common Schools of the State, the other including, in addition to those, such higher English branches as the Board should deem best adapted for use in the advanced classes; and enacted that at each Teachers' Institute there should be held an examination, in either or both of these courses, of such persons as should present themselves for that purpose, who should receive certificates entitling them to teach in any part of the State, for the term of five or of fifteen years, as they should pass a satisfactory examination in one course or in both. As the sessions of Teachers' Institutes were to commence in December immediately after the passage of this act, it became necessary for the Board to hold a special meeting to arrange the prescribed courses of study, and accordingly a meeting was held at St. Johnsbury, on the 5th of December, 1866.

In view of a possible conflict in the practical working of this law and that for the establishment of Normal Schools, by reason of the provision that certificates of precisely the same character and scope might be granted at the Institutes as at the Normal Schools, the Board were unanimously and decidedly of the opinion that the examinations ought to be quite as rigid and exacting in the one case as in the other. The same courses of study were therefore arranged with reference to both classes of examinations, as follows :

For the first course, candidates must be examined in eight distinct subjects, and the examination in the first seven must be partly written.

The written exercises will also be regarded as exercises in spelling, composition, and penmanship.

1st. Arithmetic, with mental and written exercises.

2d. Geography, with map-drawing and the elements of Physical Geography.

3d. History of the United States.

4th. Geography and History of Vermont, with map-drawing.

5th. Constitution of the United States and of Vermont.

6th. Interpretation of sentences, including parsing, analysis, paraphrasing, and the definition of words.

7th. Book-keeping, through single entry.

8th. Reading, including the elements of elocution and vocal culture.

For the second course, candidates, having passed a satisfactory examination in the first course, must be examined in—

1st. Book-keeping by double entry.

2d. Algebra, to include at least ratios and proportions, quadratic equations, and the arithmetical and geometrical series.

3d. Physical Geography.

4th. Physiology.

5th. Elements of Botany, with drawings of forms.

6th. Natural Philosophy.

7th. A thorough analysis and explanation of one book of Cowper or Thompson.

8th. Some two of the following :—Geometry, Astronomy, Chemistry, Geology, Surveying, Zoology, Evidences of Christianity, Rhetoric, Intellectual Philosophy, Moral Philosophy.

9th. A Critical Exposition of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, or Bacon's *Essays*.

It being judged impracticable, not to say impossible, for the Board itself to make the selection of practical teachers, whom the law requires to be associated with the Secretary in conducting the examinations at Teachers' Institutes, the Secretary was authorized and directed to act in behalf of the Board in making such selections in the several counties. It is believed that this law has been of great value to the State, by bringing out in each County some teachers of more than average merit, to whose ambition a State certificate for a term of years appeared a prize well worth striving for; and of nearly equal value by revealing to many other teachers their real lack of qualifications for the responsible positions which they sought to occupy. For details of the practical working of the law, reference is made to the Report of the Secretary of the Board.

At the time of this meeting the Trustees of Orange County Grammar School had not voted to accept the act of the last Legislature transforming that institution into a Normal School. But in view of the strong probability that they would so vote, and of the fact that the Trustees of Lamoille County Grammar School expressed a desire

to put that institution upon a similar foundation, it was thought expedient to take action in regard to the prospective schools, as far as circumstances would now allow. Accordingly, regulations were established, for the admission, direction, and graduation of pupils in Normal Schools, as follows:—

Classes, exhibiting the qualifications required to pass an examination for admission, may be admitted at the beginning of each Spring and Fall Term. Individuals may be admitted at any time, upon evincing qualifications corresponding to the attainments of existing classes.

Examinations of such as have completed the courses of study shall be held at the close of each Spring and Fall Term. Candidates for graduation must, at the time of graduation, be examined through the entire course in which they wish to graduate.

The certificate of graduation must be signed by the President of the Board of Trustees, the Principal of the School, and by the Secretary and visiting member of the Board of Education.

Pupils will not be permitted to study branches in the higher course until at least six of the subjects of the first course have been completed to the satisfaction of the teachers of the school; nor then to the neglect of the subjects not so completed.

No studies not laid down in the two courses of study shall be pursued in the Normal Schools.

Rev. Pliny H. White was appointed as special member of the Board to act in conjunction with the Secretary in visiting the Normal Schools, and the visitors were instructed to make the examinations for admission to said schools an occasion for visiting them.

The Board then passed to the consideration of their duties under the law requiring them to select, on or before July 1, 1867, a list of text-books to be used in the Common Schools of the State. It was decided that such selection should be based entirely upon the judgment of the Board as to the intrinsic merits of the books examined. To facilitate the examination, and to make the best avail of the advice of the eminent practical teachers whose assistance the Board were required to procure, the text books were divided into three classes, each of which was assigned to a committee, consisting of two members of the Board and two teachers. The first class, including mathematics, was assigned to Messrs. Conant and Ross, with whom were associated Messrs. L. F. Ward of Westminster, and Judah Dana of Rutland. The second class, including readers, spellers, and grammars, was assigned to Messrs. Gorham and Clark, with whom were associated Messrs. B. F. Bingham of Brattleboro and C. D. Mead of Swanton. The third class, including geography, history, and natural philosophy, was assigned to Messrs. White and Sanborn, with whom were associated Messrs. S. H. Pearl of Johnson, and J. S. Cilley of Williston. These committees were instructed to give special attention to text-

books in the classes severally assigned them; and the Board then adjourned, to meet at Waterbury on the 18th of February, 1867.

At that time and place the Board re-assembled, and proceeded to complete the laborious task in which they had been engaged much of the time since the former meeting. Numerous publishers, agents, and other persons variously interested in text-books, were in attendance, and desirous to be heard in behalf of their various books. It was deemed advisable to give them all a hearing, and thus secure for every book a full exhibition of its peculiar excellences, by a person thoroughly acquainted with and qualified to point out all its merits. No other limitation was imposed than this, that each person should confine himself to the merits of his own book, and should wholly abstain from criticism or disparagement of any books with which it came in competition. Several days were occupied in these hearings, and it is believed that substantially all that could be said in behalf of any of the books that were before the Board was said on that occasion. Then, after due deliberation and careful weighing, as well of the reasons offered by publishers or their agents, as of the opinions of the prominent teachers whose advice had been sought, and whose opinions are published in the appendix to this Report, the selections were made. The reasons which govern the action of the Board are herewith subjoined, in compliance with the law to that effect.

Town & Holbrook's Progressive Speller was adopted, for these reasons, among others: because, it is Websterian in spelling, syllabication, pronunciation, and definitions, and thus conforms to the standard generally received in Vermont; because it contains the words in most common use, so classified as to adapt it to both primary and advanced classes, thus avoiding the necessity of a primary speller, and saving a considerable item of expense; because it has the valuable feature, that it regards and treats words as the signs of ideas, and teaches at the same time the sign and the thing signified; because it contains a larger number than any other speller of words of like or similar pronunciation, but of different orthography and signification, which are classified, and defined by phrases, and then further illustrated by "dictation exercises;" and, finally, because in it the analytic method of defining derivative words by their uses, and the practical application of the rules for spelling, are fully and clearly set forth.

The revised and improved edition of Town & Holbrook's Progressive Series of Readers, with the exception of the Intermediate Readers, was adopted, to displace the old edition which has hitherto been in use. This edition retains all the valuable features of the former, and contains several new features that make it superior to that. It differs from that by excluding a portion of the matter, and introducing considerable new matter, while at the same time the new matter is so arranged that the two editions can be used by the same classes without serious inconvenience. Among the reasons which led to this

selection are the following: in Part I. the elementary sounds of the language, and all the various exercises in articulation, are fully, practically, and philosophically exemplified; the tables in articulation, and all the rules and principles in the other departments of elocution, are systematically arranged, and have, in connection with each, illustrative examples and reading exercises, selected with special reference to their adaptation to the table, rule, or principle, thus providing means for the most thorough vocal culture in every style of reading; a practical treatise on the figures of speech, and on the structure and forms of verse, with special rules for reading it, is found in this series, and in no other of the six series which were submitted to our examination; the same elocutionary system is carried through the entire series, each higher book having such additional rules and principles as adapt it to the progressive wants of pupils; the lessons in each book, as well as the series itself, are carefully graded, and carry pupils by easy and systematic steps from the alphabet up to the highest specimens of English and American literature; the reading exercises are singularly free from inelegant language and objectionable forms of expression, are characterized by a sound and pure morality, and abound in facts and sentiments worthy to be remembered; and, not to multiply reasons, it furnishes a larger number of pages for a smaller price than any other series to which our attention was called. Hillard's Sixth Reader was adopted as an appendage to this series. This book contains Bailey's Treatise on Elocution, which was claimed by practical teachers to possess peculiar merit.

Tower's Elements of English Grammar, which for several years has been in use in our schools, was recommended for continued use. Its merits have been thoroughly tested in practice, and there is no other book of the same grade at all worthy to be compared with it.

Weld's Grammar, as revised by Quackenbos and improved by Norton, was adopted, to be used by scholars who have gone through Tower's Elements or an equivalent. This grammar takes up the subject at a point entirely within the previous knowledge of the scholar, viz.: the examination of a sentence; at first without the introduction of grammatical terms, then with the use of a few terms, illustrated and defined. This is followed by exercises in enlarging, transforming, and making sentences. The definitions and rules are brief, clear, and unequivocal; and the inflections of the language are exhibited in full and well-arranged paradigms, that of the verb being worthy of special commendation. The synoptical recapitulations constitute an excellent feature. The subjects of Punctuation, Capital Letters, Versification, and Grammatical and Rhetorical Figures, are treated with sufficient fullness. The article on Composition, constituting Part V., is one of the best essays on that subject yet published, and very far superior to any similar article in any other grammar that came to the notice of the Board. In all other particulars this Grammar was found equal to any

of its competitors, and for the purpose of giving practical instruction in composition, superior to the best of them.

The subject of text-books in geography occasioned the Board no little thought and anxiety. Cornell's series had been so decidedly condemned by the popular verdict of teachers and pupils, that a change was almost a matter of necessity. But what new series to select, out of several, each of which possessed some marked excellences, and nearly every one of which had some excellences not possessed by any of the others, was a question for grave consideration. Mitchell's First Lessons, Primary, and Intermediate Geographies were adopted, for these reasons, in brief: the simplicity and clearness of the text, the gradual and constant advancement from the primary truths to the higher departments of geographical knowledge, the conciseness and completeness of the definitions, the elegance and accuracy of the maps, the attractiveness of the pictorial illustrations, and the uniform method of treating topics that are similar to each other. Since the adoption of these books, the publishers have taken measures to prepare a special edition of the Intermediate Geography for use in the schools of Vermont. This edition will contain a new quarto map of the State, engraved on copper plate; and four pages of letter press and questions, relating to the geography of Vermont, to be prepared by Rev. Pliny H. White. It is believed that this feature, while it is not to increase the cost of the books, will materially increase its value and the interest with which it will be studied. McNally's Physical Geography, accompanied by Monteith's Lessons in Astronomy, was adopted, to be used in those departments of the study which are indicated by their titles. Guyot's Common School Geography was adopted as a Physical Geography of a grade different from McNally's. Guyot's method of presenting the subject is peculiar to himself, and radically different from the method of other writers on the subject of geography. The Board regard its introduction as somewhat of an experiment, and yet an experiment worthy of a trial. Guyot's Wall Maps were also recommended.

Text-books in Arithmetic also occupied a large share of the time and attention of the Board. It was the almost universal complaint against Greenleaf's Arithmetic by the people of the State, that induced the Board last year to recommend a re-examination of text-books. In making the examination of books in this department, it was kept in mind that the chief end of mathematical studies is to so train the reasoning faculties that they will perform their operations in a strictly logical manner, and arrive at absolutely correct results, and will at the same time announce the processes and their results in language which accurately expresses and properly limits the ideas to be conveyed. It was also considered that the time employed in these studies by pupils in our Common Schools is often quite limited, and that their studies are frequently directed by teachers whose imperfect knowledge of the

science of mathematics compels them to rely upon the text-books as a guide to their instructions. No books were found that were free from objections in many particulars, but those which approached most nearly to the ideal standard of excellence, and which were therefore adopted, were Greenleaf's New Primary, New Intellectual, and New Practical Arithmetic, for use in the Public Schools; and Davies' Higher Arithmetic, for use in higher and in Union Schools. The three books first-named, though bearing the name of Greenleaf, are by no means the same books which have hitherto been in use. They are "new" in reality. The objectionable features of the old books have been mainly removed, and the books have been so thoroughly re-written that they retain little, if any, of the material of the old. The New Primary adopts what is called "the object-method" of presenting the thought, comes directly to the subject, and is gradually progressive. The New Intellectual takes up the subject where the Primary leaves it, and treats it in a logical manner and quite fully. The New Practical adopts the same logical method which has been used in the Intellectual, and contains enough written arithmetic for all common transactions, with no obsolete or useless matter. This is to take the place of Greenleaf's Common School Arithmetic, and is much superior to that. In Davies' Higher Arithmetic is to be found all that the most advanced pupils in our schools will need to know in regard to the science of numbers.

Greenleaf's New Elementary Algebra was adopted, because, though not so exhaustive of the subject as some other treatises, it contains so much as will be found necessary for use in the high schools of this State.

Quackenbos's Philosophy was adopted and is recommended for use in Graded and Union Schools, and not at all in the ordinary District Schools. It treats the subject as fully and extensively as is desirable. An interesting feature of the book is that, in connection with each chapter, there are presented problems which require a practical application of the principles announced in the chapter.

Lossing's Common School History of the United States was adopted, for these reasons: it is comparatively brief, and so the student may reasonably hope to go through it; its style is very terse, and unencumbered with needless words; it is the work of a historian, and not of a mere book-maker; and the price is moderate in comparison with the prices of other school histories.

Hall's Geography and History of Vermont was adopted, it being the only text-book extant in that department, and one which when revised and improved as contemplated in a new edition, will be all that is needed for the present.

Payson, Dunton & Scribner's series of writing books was adopted. It has been in use in our schools for some years, and has given complete satisfaction.

The selection of books being completed, the publishers of the

several books selected, entered into written obligations, to the satisfaction of the Board, in regard to the prices at which the books shall be furnished. It is believed that these obligations provide an effectual safeguard, if any such is necessary, against undue advantage being taken of the privileges acquired by the publishers.

At this session of the Board the Trustees of Orange County Grammar School at Randolph, made known that they had accepted the act of the last Legislature constituting that institution a Normal School. Edward Conant, A. M., was thereupon nominated as the Principal of said school. At the same session, the Trustees of Lamoille County Grammar School at Johnson, made proposals in accordance with the provisions of said act, for the establishment of that school as a Normal School in the Third Congressional District; and no proposal being made by any other institution, their offer was accepted, and the school was established accordingly. The Board nominated Silas H. Pearl, A. M., as Principal of the Normal School at Johnson; and the nominations of Messrs. Conant and Pearl were in due season confirmed by the trustees of the institutions of which they were several designated as principals.

The location of the Normal School in the First Congressional District was not made without much consideration and balancing of conflicting claims. The Trustees of Bristol Academy at Bristol, of Rutland County Grammar School at Castleton, and of North Bennington Academy at North Bennington, made proposals on behalf of their several institutions, all of them in accordance with the requirements of the law. The interest in Normal Schools manifested not only by the Trustees of Bristol Academy, but by nearly all the leading citizens of the town, and their anxiety to have such a school located at Bristol, were so intense, that the Board much desired to find sufficient reasons for establishing the school at that place. But in locating a school for that District, it was judged necessary to leave out of account almost the whole of Washington County; the facilities for traveling being such that most of the school population of that county which would wish to attend the Normal School, would inevitably go either to Randolph or Johnson. This being so, the centrality of Castleton with reference to the rest of the District rendered that the evidently suitable location, other things being equal. Other things were made equal by the liberal undertaking of the trustees and citizens to make repairs and alterations of the school-house to the full satisfaction of the Board, provide any additional apparatus that should be required, and furnish competent instruction for the term of five years. Accordingly, the Normal School for the First District was located at Castleton.

In compliance with the statute, requiring the Board to establish rules for the revocation of teacher's certificates granted to graduates

of Normal Schools and to persons examined at Teachers' Institutes, the following regulations were adopted :—

I. Certificates granted at the Teacher's Institutes, or to graduates of the State Normal Schools, may be revoked

1. For incompetency to give instruction in the branches required to be taught in the public schools of the State ;

2. For inability to govern such schools.

3. For setting an evil or immoral example to the scholars of such schools

II. Whenever any three legal voters in any School District, where, at the time, the holder of such certificate shall be teaching, shall, in writing, prefer any of the above-named charges against the holder of such certificate to the Secretary of the Board of Education, the Secretary shall appoint a time and place for hearing said charges and provide a board of three persons to examine into and hear said charges, one of whom shall be a member, or the Secretary, of the Board of Education, and, when practicable, said board shall have on it one or more of the persons granting such certificate, and the Secretary shall notify the persons making the charge and the holder of such certificate, of said time and place, and the board, before which the same shall be heard.

III. Testimony in such cases may be presented, in whole or in part, by written evidence on the same notice and before the same authorities that depositions are now taken for use in courts of Law

IV. Said board, after hearing the parties on said charges, and their evidences relating thereto, at the time and place appointed, shall make their decision in writing, and report the same to the Secretary of the Board of Education, who shall make a record thereof, and in event said board shall find any of said charges sustained, they shall in writing by them signed, revoke such certificate, and give a copy of such revocation to the holder of such certificate, and to the town clerk of the town in which the holder is teaching school.

One session of the schools at Randolph and Johnson has already taken place, and another is now in progress. The results thus far secured have quite equalled the highest reasonable expectations that have been entertained. In estimating those results, it must not be forgotten that Normal Schools are a new thing in Vermont, however old they may be elsewhere ; and that the establishment of them in this State was regarded by many as an experiment whose issue would be quite doubtful. Regarded with hostility by some who are naturally opposed to all progressive movements, and by a few others from whom better things were to be expected, and receiving an enthusiastic support from only a few, they have maintained their position, and have yielded such first-fruits as warrant the confident assurance that, with suitable support, material and moral, they will

prove eminently serviceable to the interests of Education. For details as to their practical working, their results, their difficulties, and their necessities, reference is made to the report of the Secretary of the Board, and to the documents embodied in it

The advantages of our present school system are becoming more obvious, year by year. A comparison of the condition of our schools now with their condition eleven years ago, when this system came into operation, shows a very decided advance in many important respects. Let the fostering care of the Legislature and of the People be continued and increased, and our Schools will at no distant day become one of the chief glories of the State.

All which is respectfully submitted.

PAUL DILLINGHAM, *ex officio*,
PLINY H. WHITE,
MERRITT CLARK,
D. D. GORHAM,
JONATHAN ROSS,
E. CONANT,
A. J. SANBORN.

} *Board
of
Education.*

Secretary's Report.

SECRETARY'S REPORT.

To the Honorable Vermont Board of Education :

In accordance with the provision of law which requires the Secretary of your Board to "prepare and present to the Board of Education, on the first day of their annual session, a report of his official doings for the year, and a statement of the condition of the Common Schools in the State; of the expenditures of the school monies therein; and such suggestions for improving their organization and modes of instruction, together with such other information in regard to systems of instruction in other States and countries, as he shall deem proper," I herewith present to your Honorable Board, and through you to the Legislature and people of the State, the Eleventh Annual Report of this Department.

Of the ordinary and regular official duties pertaining to this office, it is perhaps sufficient to say that they have been regularly performed in due season. Some important additions to the duties of the Secretary and Board have been made by recent legislation; and of these new duties mention will be made in connection with the topics to which they relate.

TEACHERS' INSTITUTES.

The character of the Institutes was, of course, very much changed by the law of the last session of the Legislature, which provides that an examination, in a certain course of study, which the Board of Education were directed to arrange, shall be held at each Institute thereafter to be held in the State. The law in regard to the matter is in the following words :—

An Act relating to the duties of the Board of Education and the examination of teachers.

It is hereby enacted, &c.

SEC. 1. It shall be the duty of the Board of Education to arrange two courses of study, one of which shall include all the branches required by law to be taught in the common schools of the State, and the other shall include all contained in the first course, and such higher English branches as the Board shall deem best adapted for use in the advanced classes of the common schools of the State, and forward the same to the principal of each academy in this State, and

to cause the same to be published in all school registers hereafter issued, and the Board of Education shall have power to alter and revise said courses, from time to time as may be required.

SEC. 2. At each teachers' institute now required by law to be holden annually in each county in the State, there shall be holden, under direction of the Board of Education, by the Secretary of the Board, and two or more practical teachers, to be appointed by the Board from the county in which the institute is holden, an examination of all such persons as shall present themselves, in either or both of the courses established as aforesaid. And said Board are authorized to give to each person who shall present satisfactory evidence of good moral character, and pass a thorough examination in the first course, a certificate which shall entitle the holder to the right to teach in the common schools of the State, in any part of the State, for the term of five years from the date of such certificate; and to each person who shall present satisfactory evidence of good moral character, and pass a thorough examination in both of said courses, a certificate which shall entitle the holder to the right to teach in the common schools of the State, in any part of the State, for the term of fifteen years from the date of such certificate. All of such certificates shall be signed by the Secretary of the Board of Education and the persons conducting the examination under the direction of the Board. The Board shall have authority to revoke such certificates at any time on good cause shown, under such regulations as the Board shall establish.

SEC. 3. No person shall have the right to teach in any of the common schools of the State, after five years from the passage of this act, unless such person shall have such a certificate as provided for in this act; and all power of town superintendents to grant certificates is revoked after five years from the passage of this act.

SEC. 4. Persons appointed by the Board of Education to make examinations in connection with the Secretary of the Board, under section two of this act, shall receive from the treasury of the State, the sum of three dollars for each day spent in such examination, to be paid on the allowance of the Auditor of Accounts.

SEC. 5. This act shall take effect from its passage.

Approved November 19, 1866.

The first knowledge which I had of the passage of this law was obtained by reading it when published in the newspapers, although it must, of necessity, and immediately work a decided change in the whole character of the Institutes. Upon publication of the law, it became necessary that the Governor should call the Board of Education together for the purpose of arranging the two courses of study required, and then that the courses of study, thus arranged, should be published in circulars and disseminated throughout the State, in order that teachers might avail themselves of the opportunity thus given. All of these things were done as soon as possible, but they

necessarily required time, and thus the Fall Institutes were delayed until Winter.

The first Institute was held in Bristol, in the County of Addison, on the 15th and 16th days of January. The meetings were held in the Methodist Church, and from the first were quite fully attended by the citizens of the town and vicinity. The attendance of teachers was fair, but not as large as has been usual in this County. Here was held the first examination of teachers, under the act of the last session of the Legislature, and this fact added largely to the interest of the session. Prof. Kellogg of Middlebury, and O. H. Kile, the Principal of the Vergennes High School, were invited to act as associates in the examination of the teachers, and did so act, and likewise rendered valuable assistance in the general work of the Institute. There were twelve applicants for State Certificates, and the examination of these applicants excited a general and warm interest.

Another interesting feature of this Institute was the feeling aroused by a suggestion that, by proper action on behalf of the citizens, it was possible that the location of the State Normal School for the First Congressional District might be secured for Bristol. The suggestion was received and greeted with an interest amounting almost to excitement; was largely commented on by the residents, and elicited the expression of a determination to make application to the Board for the location of the School.

Prof. Kellogg gave valuable instruction in regard to Reading, and Mr. Kile illustrated in an able manner the true method of teaching Geography. The Institute was well received, and seemed to leave a useful influence behind it.

The Second Institute was held in the Congregational Church at Richmond, for the County of Chittenden, on the 22d and 23d days of January. This was, as has often been the case in Chittenden County, one of the smallest gatherings of the year. The attendance of teachers was also small. J. S. Cilley, Principal of Williston Academy, and Asa Sanderson, Principal of the Academy at Essex, acted as associates upon the Committee of Examination, and also assisted very acceptably and usefully as instructors in the Institute.

There were here eight applications for examination. In the closing exercises of the Institute, a most timely and effective appeal was made by Rev. Mr. Halley in behalf of thoroughly good schools, showing the certainty of their favorable operation upon all the moral and material interests of any community where they might be established.

The session of the Third Institute began in Moretown, for the County of Washington, on the 25th and 26th days of January, and was quite largely attended, both by teachers and citizens of the vicinity. Mr. J. S. Spalding, Principal of Barre Academy, and Rev. A. B. Dascomb of Waitsfield, acted upon the Committee of Examination, and twelve applicants for State Certificates were examined.

Messrs. Spalding and Dascomb also assisted in the regular lessons of the Institute, and the evident interest of Mr. Spalding, one of our most experienced and most successful teachers, in the exercises of the occasion, and the telling remarks of both gentlemen, contributed largely to make the session useful as well as pleasant.

The Fourth Institute began its session in the Academy Hall of the High School Building in Swanton, for the County of Franklin, on the 29th of January, and was a large and useful meeting. C. D. Mead, Principal of the Swanton High School, and J. S. D. Taylor, Principal of St. Albans High School, acted as the Committee of Examination; and seventeen applicants were examined. Professor Kellogg of Middlebury College, addressed the Institute, with his usual force and success, upon the important topics of Reading and Vocal Culture. The interest shown by the large attendance of the citizens, and their evident sympathy with the general educational movement, was encouraging indeed. The effect of a well conducted Public School upon the general character of a community is strikingly manifested in many of our larger towns. Such effect is easily perceptible in Swanton.

The Fifth Institute, for the County of Grand Isle, was held at Alburgh Springs, in the Hall of the Academy, on the first and second days of February. The Committee of Examination here, consisted of A. D. Whitney, Principal of the Alburgh Academy, and Mr. Phelps, a practical teacher of the County. There were fifteen teachers examined as applicants for State Certificates. The village was not large, and the vicinity rather sparsely inhabited, but the attendance of teachers and people was very good, and indicated an increase of educational interest. Rev. C. B. Cady, Superintendent, was present, and in brief remarks endorsed the methods of instruction pursued, and gave much encouragement to all.

The Sixth Institute was held at Wolcott, for the County of Lamoille. Here the attendance was very large indeed from all parts of the county. Rev. Edwin Wheelock of Cambridge, and S. H. Pearl, Principal of the State Normal School at Johnson, were desired and consented to act as an Examining Committee. But the written questions for examination which had been used elsewhere, having been accidentally mislaid, it was proposed to make the examination of the teachers entirely an oral one, and in consequence of this necessary decision, though urgent invitations were extended, no response was made, and accordingly no examination of teachers occurred. Rev. H. Herrick, the Superintendent of Wolcott, had exerted himself to secure a general interest in the session, and the Institute was one of the largest and most successful that ever occurred in a county always characterized by a wide-awake interest in schools.

Greensboro', in the County of Orleans, was selected as the location for the Institute for that county, in accordance with a very cordial

invitation from the citizens there ; and the Institute was held there in the Congregational Church on the 8th and 9th days of February. The Institutes in Orleans County have been warmly welcomed and very largely attended for many years, and such was the case in the present instance. M. F. Varney, Principal of the North Troy Academy, and A. C. Burbank of the High School in Barton, acted as the Committee of Examination, and forty-four teachers applied for certificates. The session was very largely attended by the citizens, and teachers were present from several counties. A warm and general interest on the part of the citizens contributed to increase the efficiency and usefulness of the gathering.

The Eighth Institute was located at Island Pond, by invitation, and was held in the Congregational Church on the 12th and 13th days of February. The isolated position of Island Pond in relation to the rest of the county, would naturally be expected to prevent a very general attendance from the more remote sections, but still the attendance was as large as could reasonably have been anticipated. There were eighteen applicants for State certificates; and C. W. King of Lunenburg, and J. E. Woodbury of Concord assisted upon the Committee of Examination.

This was the last of the Winter series of Institutes ; the remaining six being deferred until Spring or Summer.

The Ninth Institute—it being the first of the Spring series—was held in the Congregational Church at Peacham, for the County of Caledonia, on the 4th and 5th days of June. Mr. C. Q. Tirrell, Principal of Peacham Academy, and Miss Sarah E. Chamberlain, of Peacham, acted as a Committee of Examination, and twelve applicants presented themselves for examination. This was the largest Institute that ever assembled in the county, and the interest manifested by all was sustained to the end. Rev. Messrs. Fisk, Watts and Webber, and others, took part in the exercises and contributed to the success of the session. Mr. G. A. Walton of Lawrence, Mass., a teacher of experience and reputation and the author of the arithmetical cards recently adopted by the Board, was present at my request, and explained the true method of using the cards, and assisted generally in the work of the session. The Institute was well received by all, and seemed to exert a good influence.

The Tenth Institute was held at North Brookfield, for the County of Orange, in the Congregational Church, on the 7th and 8th days of June. The attendance here was very good—both of citizens and teachers. Mr. Edward Conant, Principal, and Miss A. M. Doton, one of the teachers of the Normal School at Randolph, and Mr. C. G. Tarbell, Superintendent of Brookfield, acted as a Committee of Examination, and fifteen applicants were examined. Mr. Conant gave instruction in Grammar and Fractions ; Mr. Walton in reference to the best method of teaching Arithmetic intellectually and the proper use of the Arithmetical Cards, and Mr. Tarbell and Rev. John Britton, Su-

perintendent of Bradford, and Rev. Mr. Emerson of Brookfield, participated in the work of the session, and all together combined to make the Institute instructive and useful.

The Eleventh Institute, for the County of Bennington, was held at Arlington, in the Town Hall, on the 11th and 12th days of June. The attendance of teachers was very good ; but as in the case of a former Institute in this town, there were few of the citizens of the village present. Rev. P. S. Pratt of Dorset, and Miss Eliza M. Clark of Burr Seminary at Manchester, assisted as an Examining Committee. There were here eighteen applicants for State Certificates. Mr. Walton gave instruction in Arithmetic ; Rev. Messrs. Olmstead, Principal of Burr Seminary, and Cushman of Manchester, and Mr. John Curtis of Dorset, were present, and all assisted in securing a useful session.

The Twelfth Institute was held in Fairhaven, for the County of Rutland, on the 14th and 15th days of June. The session was held in the Public Hall of the noble School House which stands as a monument of the liberality and public spirit of that thriving town. The attendance here was very large, as it has usually been in Rutland County—both of citizens and teachers. Mr. H. J. Porter, Principal of Fairhaven High School, Mr. Judah Dana, Principal, and Miss H. M. Dean, Assistant Teacher, in the Rutland High School, officiated as a Committee of Examination, and seventeen applicants for State Certificates were examined. Mr. Dana participated in the instruction of the session also, giving clear and practical lessons in Arithmetic. Mrs. W. H. Smith of the celebrated Oswego Training School, exhibited in a most pleasing as well as forcible way, the true science of Geography, and illustrated the better methods of teaching it. Rev. A. N. Adams of Fairhaven also addressed the Institute ; and the session was very successful.

The Thirteenth Institute was held in the Town Hall in Springfield, for the County of Windsor, on the 18th and 19th days of June, and was one of the largest and best gatherings of the kind that I have ever seen in the State. Mr. A. M. Wheeler, Principal of the Academy at Springfield, Mr. H. H. Shaw, Principal of Chester Academy, and Miss J. E. Whitney, Teacher of the Springfield Graded School, acted as the Committee of Examination ; and seventeen Teachers were examined. Instruction was given in Geography by Mrs. Smith ; Mr. Walton treated the subject of Arithmetic—and a good degree of interest prevailed throughout the session.

The Fourteenth and last Institute occurred at Brattleboro', for the County of Windham, on the 21st and 22d days of June. The Institute came here in accordance with an invitation extended by vote of the citizens assembled in School Meeting, and was held in the Town Hall, probably the largest audience room in the State. Eleven applicants for State Certificates were examined here, Mr. B. F. Bingham, Principal of Brattleboro' High School, Miss H. G. Thomas, a Teacher

of one of the village schools in Brattleboro', and Mr. C. M. Russell, Principal of Wilmington High School, acting as the Committee of Examination. Mr. Walton here again took up his favorite theme of Arithmetic, and otherwise assisted in the work of the Institute. Mr. Bingham also assisted; and the topic of Geography was treated by Mrs. Smith. The evening audience to Mrs. Smith's lecture upon the science of Geography, was the largest educational audience that I have ever seen in the State, and at the close of the session a cordial and unanimous vote of thanks was given by the members of the Institute, to Mr. Walton and Mrs. Smith. Rev. Addison Brown, so long known for his active interest in educational advancement, was present, and expressed his gratification at the success of the session.

It was, at the instigation of leading citizens of Brattleboro', that, many years since, the law providing for the support of Graded Schools was enacted by the Vermont Legislature, and thus a feature adopted into our school system that is destined to revolutionize our whole scheme of education. Graded Schools have been supported in Brattleboro' now for more than a quarter of a century, and the interest in their success and the confidence in their capacity has steadily increased from the beginning.

Thus closed the Eleventh Series of Annual Institutes that have been held in the State since the organization of the Board.

THE EXAMINATION OF TEACHERS AT THE INSTITUTES.

I have already quoted, in the first pages of this Report, the enactment of the last session of the Legislature, by which an examination of all Teachers who may apply for State Certificates, is required to be provided. It is easily apparent to any who are acquainted with the practical working of our school law, and the capacity and attainment of the general body of our teachers, that this law, if sustained by future legislatures, and thoroughly enforced, must, of necessity, very powerfully affect our schools. It is intensely practical in its nature; it will go into partial operation immediately—and indeed it has already done so; and by its own conditions, it will, after a short time, comprehend the whole school system in the State. Perhaps no legislation of recent years will, if permanent, so directly, so powerfully, and so universally affect the schools.

As before stated, no notice of the passage of the law had been given to the Board or its agents officially, till the act appeared in the general publication of the laws of the session. But taking effect upon its passage, and approved on the 19th day of November, it therefore became necessary to apply it to the conduct of the Institutes, that according to custom, should begin immediately. But as the law required that the Board should assemble and prepare a course of study in which the examinations should be held, and in which the teachers should be prepared, little time was available for all the im-

portant preliminary work. The Institutes were deferred, a meeting of the Board of Education was immediately called, and the two courses of study prepared, which the law requires. These two courses of study as prepared by the Board, appears in the Report of the Board prefixed.

The meeting of the Board was held in December, beginning on the 5th, and the two courses of study were printed and circulated as rapidly as possible. But the Winter Institutes could not be deferred too long, and began on the 15th January.

A great addition was made by this law to the labors and responsibilities of the Board, and as usual, the weight of both must and did fall upon the executive agent of the Board.

To block out and determine the character and scope of an examination that should comply with the requirements of the law, and be of any practical value to the State and the Schools, will be found by any who undertake it, to be no light task. The time given for the accomplishment of this important work was so brief that no wonder need be legitimately excited if the character of the examinations for the past year is found to come short of what it should have been, and short of what some other person, under more favorable circumstances, and with more time for thought and preparation, can easily accomplish.

It may be well, before describing the character of the examination, as it actually occurred, to stop and ask what should be its character, having reference to the law requiring it, and the actual condition of the State, and the Schools, and the Teachers, and the existing means of examination in actual use.

And in discussing this matter, I refer to the examination in the first course of study, as there was not a single examination in the second course of study.

In the first place, then, the recent law requires the first course to "include all the branches required by law to be taught in the Common Schools of the State," and the General Statute requires instruction of the young "in Orthography, Reading, Writing, English Grammar, Geography, History and Constitution of the United States, and Good Behavior, and special instruction shall be given "in the Geography and History, Constitution and Principles of Government of Vermont." Such must be the scope of the examination to come up to the mere letter of the law; and manifestly it must go still further, and endeavor to ascertain the competency to govern and control a school, this being palpably the very first in importance of all the qualifications of the teacher, and one which every Superintendent, in practice, finds himself under the necessity of ascertaining if possible. Hence, by some means, in the examination for State Certificates, availing for five years, the competency of the teacher to govern and manage a school should be ascertained.

In determining what should be the standard of qualifications to be exacted by such an examination, many difficulties must be anticipa-

ted and avoided. It would be impossible, in providing for an examination to which, in all cases possibly, and in some cases very probably, quite large classes of teachers might be expected to present themselves, to enter as minutely into details in regard to any of the various branches of study as would be desirable in conducting examinations of a school, or of classes uniformly small; and, as will be seen in the short account of the Institutes, the classes varied from eight to forty-four in number, during the past year. The appropriate effort in this direction would seem to be to endeavor to propound questions, not too numerous, which still should be of such a nature that their answers should necessarily reveal either an acquaintance, or lack of acquaintance with the more general, prominent and necessary points in each of the several branches included within the scope of the examination. While a great difference in the attainments of applicants would naturally be expected, and manifestly a standard of qualification adapted to the capacity of the most competent would be too severe for a large proportion of the teachers; still, as manifestly no one ought to receive a State Certificate to teach any where within the limits of the State, without exhibiting a capacity to teach in any of the required branches reasonably well.

Again, the State certificates of a given grade, being of equal value throughout the State, the standard of examination must of necessity be uniform; and a uniformity that should be perfect within itself, as well as above the suspicion of a lack of uniformity on the part of any, can only be secured by a simple identity of questions.

It became necessary, likewise, to determine whether the examination should, in the main, be entirely oral, entirely written, or of a mixed character. Whether the questions were to be oral, or written, it is evident that it would be impossible to secure the uniformity of standard necessarily contemplated in the law, by questions that should vary in different sections. The questions, then, to be propounded, whatever their scope, must be identically the same questions in one County as in another, or else the desired uniformity of standard would not be gained. But if the questions were to be identically the same, ought they not to be written or printed?

It was in the highest degree important, also, to so conduct the examinations, that their result should be as free as possible from any well-founded imputation of having been varied by any lack of perfect impartiality.

Endeavoring, as far as was within my power, to secure all the important ends thus alluded to, I determined that the examination should be in the main a written one; the questions to be printed upon cards and presented to each applicant, and their answers to be required in writing.

Accordingly, I divided the various branches into six divisions, entitling them: "Geography," "Grammar," "Arithmetic," "History and Constitution of the United States," "Geography and History of Ver-

mont," and "Methods of Teaching." I then prepared ten questions in each branch; and here I found another difficulty to be met. In all examinations, whether of schools or teachers, a great diversity of talent and attainment will of course be encountered; and in all such cases the irrepressible disposition of the more competent to assist the less competent in their answers to the questions or solutions of problems, is a source of embarrassment so great as to often deprive the results of such examinations of all value whatever. To avoid this difficulty, therefore, I prepared six different sets of questions in each of the branches, lettered "A," "B," &c.,—and in the conduct of the examinations proposed so to distribute the questions as that no two in the immediate neighborhood of each other would have the same questions; and the intention was, after the written questions should have been answered, then to follow up with such oral questions as should suggest themselves at the time, to either of the Committees, and thus give an opportunity to those, if any, who might fail with the written questions, to redeem their reputation by their response to the oral examination. But, upon proceeding with the examination, I found immediately, that the actual qualifications of the teachers, as evinced in their answers and in the time required to respond, were so much lower than I had anticipated, that no time would be left after the written examination, for any further examination orally. In every case, during the eight Winter Institutes, the whole day was consumed in the written examination. On this account, when the time for the Spring Institutes arrived, I reduced the questions in number to eight in each branch.

Now, in the conduct of the Institutes, from the remarks of teachers and citizens, from a quite extensive and not quite as agreeable correspondence with many in regard to the Institute examinations, I am fully persuaded that a wide discussion has already taken place and will continue, in regard to the law requiring these examinations, as well as in regard to the administration of the law. And an attempt to repeal the law at the approaching session is quite probable. A discussion in the Legislature, of the law, in all its bearings, will be beneficial or the reverse, as it shall rest upon a knowledge of the facts involved. I have therefore thought it my duty, in the expectation of such discussion, to insert here copies of the questions actually used in the Institute examinations during the year.

VERMONT BOARD OF EDUCATION, }
SECRETARY'S OFFICE, A. D. 1867. }

The following questions are to be answered, in writing, by those who, upon examination at the State Normal Schools, or at the Teachers' Institutes, desire to obtain State Certificates, for five years.

Three-quarters of the questions in each branch must be correctly answered.

Each applicant is expected to work independently, without reference to others, or communication with them, and to answer questions fully, and to answer them at a single session.

The answers of applicants will be taken as exemplifications of their knowledge of Grammar.

Write your name, age, and Post-office address:

Name, Age,

Post Office address,

(A.)

GRAMMAR.

1. Give a synopsis of the verbs write, go, and know, in the Potential and Subjunctive Moods.
2. Give the principal parts of the following verbs: dive, strive, weave, build, lie, lay, burst, set, sit, swim, eat, and drink.
3. Write the possessive plural of child, woman, it, who, thou, ox.
4. Write a sentence containing the word "that" used as a relative, as an adjective and as a conjunction; and state when "that," as a relative, is preferable to "who" or "which."
5. Parse each word in the following sentence: "Teach me what is right."
6. Analyze and parse the following sentence: "Education is the only interest worthy the deep controlling anxiety of a truly thoughtful man."
7. Define an elementary sound, a letter, a word, a phrase, a clause, a simple sentence, a paragraph, a definition.
8. Parse "I had rather not be examined in Grammar."

ARITHMETIC.

1. Change $\frac{3}{4}$ to a decimal fraction, multiply it by four one-thousandths, divide the product by five millionths, and add $\frac{3}{4}$.
2. Find the sum, difference, product and quotient of seven-ninths and two-sevenths.
3. Reduce to a common denominator $\frac{3}{4}$, $\frac{9}{10}$, $\frac{7}{8}$, and five-sixths, and demonstrate it.
4. Find the greatest common divisor and the least common multiple of 18, 24, 30, and 36.
5. A merchant sold sugar at 8 cents and gained 10 per cent.; what per cent. would he have gained had he sold it for nine cents per pound?
6. What is the bank discount on \$194, for sixty days, at $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. per month.
7. In a geometrical progression, the first term being 32 and the ratio $\frac{1}{2}$, what is the fourth term?
8. Define Abstract, Denominate, Concrete and Composite numbers.

GENERAL QUESTIONS AS TO TEACHING.

1. State what is meant by Object Teaching?
2. What faculties would be specially developed by the study of Arithmetic, Grammar and Geography, respectively?
3. Give your views of school discipline, and your methods of enforcing it.
4. What good books exist on the theory and practice of teaching?
5. How would you impart moral instruction?
6. When is a class recitation successful?
7. Of what use is "ciphering" in school?
8. How would you endeavor to secure the coöperation of parents?

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY OF VERMONT.

1. Bound Vermont, and give a general description of its soil, climate, and productions.
2. When and where was the first Constitution of Vermont adopted?

3. Describe the Missisquoi River, its tributaries, and the tract watered by it.
4. Give a brief sketch of the life and character of Thomas Chittenden, and his connection with the early history of Vermont.
5. Give the leading Physical characteristics of Vermont, and the results caused by them.
6. What are the chief mineral products of Vermont.
7. State what you can of the history of the Indians who once inhabited Vermont?
8. Give the leading features of the Constitution of the State, and the leading characteristics of the people.

GEOGRAPHY.

1. Give the Latitude and Longitude of Washington, London, San Francisco.
2. Define Zodiac, Ecliptic, Meridian and Isothermal-line.
3. Mention the principal Ocean Currents, and give the prevalent theory for the causes of oceanic currents.
4. Give the area, boundaries and population of the United States, and of Vermont.
5. Bound your own County, and give its principal towns, rivers and mountains.
6. Mention the principal plateaus, plains and deserts of the world.
7. Describe the Mississippi River and its four largest tributaries, and mention the principal city on each.
8. State the resemblances and differences between the Eastern and Western Continents.

HISTORY AND CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES.

1. How is the President of the United States chosen? How are United States Senators elected, and for what time? How are Representatives chosen, and for what time? and what is the basis of representation in the House?
2. When was the Constitution of the United States adopted? Who framed it? Who were its chief advocates?
3. What causes led to the late Rebellion? and who were prominent actors therein?
4. What was the most important battle of the war of 1812? when and where was it fought? with what results?
5. What connection had Robert Morris, Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson with American History?
6. Who was Daniel Webster? Henry Clay? John C. Calhoun? James Buchanan?
7. Name the principal battles of the Great Rebellion.
8. What discoveries were made by the Cabots? What settlements were made by the French and Spaniards within the present limits of the United States?

(B.)

GENERAL QUESTIONS AS TO TEACHING.

1. What faculties of the mind are first developed?
2. Are Arithmetic and Geography of the same nature, and to be taught in the same way?
3. What is the best method of teaching Spelling?
4. What is the chief end of Education?
5. Give your views of the necessity of corporal punishment?
6. Of what use are reviews in school?
7. State your views in reference to the usefulness of School Registers, and the consequences of neglecting to fill them out and file them according to law.
8. What are the chief obstacles which the teacher meets in the Vermont Schools?

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY OF VERMONT.

1. What was the origin of the controversy between the people of the New Hampshire Grants and the "Yorkers?"
2. Describe the River System of Vermont.
3. Bound the largest and smallest County in the State.
4. What are the natural facilities for manufacturing in Vermont?
5. Who was Seth Warner? and what did he do?
6. Who first discovered Vermont? where the first settlement?
7. What are the leading mineral products of Vermont?
8. What rivers in Vermont pass through the Green Mountains?

HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES.

1. Give the causes of the Revolution?
2. Give an account of the "Boston Tea Party."
3. What New Englanders were leading Generals in the Revolution?
4. Give a sketch of the Battle of Bunker Hill.
5. What caused the war of 1812?
6. Sketch the Secession movement of 1882.
7. Who were the Federalists?
8. Give the leading events in the life of George Washington.

GRAMMAR.

1. Write the possessive, singular and plural, of mistress, ox, child, woman, servant, beau, daughter-in-law, she, who.
2. Give the present tense, second person plural of the verbs say, slay, strike, drown, and do, in all the moods.
3. Sink or swim, I will know whether this be true or not. Parse it.
4. What is man that thou art mindful of him? Parse what, that, and mindful.
5. Define the various moods.
6. What is the difference between parsing and analysis?
7. When is a neuter verb in the passive voice?
8. When do adjectives have case?

GEOGRAPHY.

1. Name six mountainous and five level States of the United States.
2. Give the six largest tributaries of the Mississippi.
3. Describe the longest river in the United States.
4. Bound the Indian and Atlantic Oceans.
5. Name the leading vegetable productions of Greenland, Ireland and South Carolina.
6. Distinguish the Frigid and Torrid Zones by their characteristic animals.
7. Why do the climates of Spain and Vermont differ?
8. Of what use are deserts?

ARITHMETIC.

1. If four and two-fifths bushels of corn at \$1.25 per bushel, are given for $3\frac{1}{2}$ bushels of wheat, how much cost eight and four-ninths bushels of wheat?
2. A surface ten-elevenths of a rod wide contains two rods and 20 square rods; what part of a mile is its length?
3. Divide \$1,345 to A, B and C, so that when A receives \$3 $\frac{1}{2}$, B shall receive two and four-fifths, and C shall receive four and one-sixth dollars as often as A receives six and one-sixth dollars.
4. Define per cent., fraction, common measure, circle.
5. For what sum must a note, payable in five months, be written, that, discounted at a bank, the proceeds thereof will purchase a house-lot 8 rods long, 115 feet and one-half wide, worth at the rate of \$5,000 per acre.

6. The area of a right-angled triangle is 92 feet ; the perpendicular is to the base as 2 to 3 ; required the hypotenuse.
7. State the relation that may exist between Fractions and Proportions.
8. Define Alligation, Annual Interest, Compound Interest, and give the difference between Arithmetical and Geometrical Proportion.

(C.)

GEOGRAPHY.

1. Bound Kentucky, Florida, Michigan.
2. Give five principal Eastern branches of the Mississippi.
3. For what is South America noted ? give its principal mountains and rivers.
4. Give the principal Lakes and Seas in North America, Europe, Asia.
5. Give the principal Gulfs, Bay and Rivers in Europe.
6. What is the main mountain system of the Eastern Continent ?
7. Distinguish Europe and Africa by their Vegetable productions.
8. What are Latitude and Longitude ? and of what use ?

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY OF VERMONT.

1. State the physical features of Vermont which determine the water-courses and basins ; and give the exceptions to the general rule, if any.
2. Give a sketch of Ethan Allen, and the leading events of his life.
3. Compare together the largest and smallest Counties of Vermont.
4. What are the bases upon which the State Senators and Representatives are elected ?
5. What are the limitations of the Right of Suffrage in Vermont ?
6. How are alterations of the Constitution of Vermont effected ?
7. What towns or cities in Vermont exceed five thousand in population ?
8. Locate the five highest mountains.

GENERAL QUESTIONS AS TO TEACHING.

1. How best develop the observing faculties of your pupils ?
2. How best teach the elements of the English Language to beginners ?
3. State how, in your opinion, recitations should be conducted.
4. How best develop the expressive faculties of your scholars ?
5. How improve the manners of your scholars ? is this important ? why ?
6. State how you would enforce school discipline.
7. How early may exercises in Composition be employed ?
8. What is the best method of teaching Geography.

HISTORY AND CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES.

1. Describe the defeat of Braddock.
2. Who were the Puritans ? what was their history ?
3. What can you say about Captain John Smith, of Virginia ?
4. What and when was "Shay's Rebellion" ?
5. Who was Aaron Burr ? what did he do ?
6. When, where and by whom was Lord Cornwallis captured ? what resulted therefrom ?
7. Who were the Iroquois Indians ?
8. When and by whom was Slavery introduced into the United States ? was it ever countenanced by the People of New England ?

ARITHMETIC.

1. Define Division, and all the terms used therein.
2. When is the multiplier a denominate number ?

3. Give the amount of \$405 at interest 496 days, at simple interest, compound interest, and interest payable annually.
4. Give the difference between Simple and Compound Proportion.
5. A merchant bought flour, and sold the first lot at 9 per cent. loss; then bought three times as much at 8 per cent. gain; how then did he stand? and at what per cent. advance should he have sold the last lot to have gained 6 per cent. on the whole?
6. How ascertain the quantity of boards or plank that can be sawed from a log?
7. State the effect of the adoption of the Arabic Notation upon the progress of arithmetical science.
8. Explain the process for finding the greatest common measure of two quantities.

GRAMMAR.

1. Define Case, Person, Mood, Tense.
2. Compare ill, evil, much, bad, eternal.
3. Give the principal parts of the verbs bite, chide, clothe, cut, hew, load, see, he, stride and work.
4. What are Active, Passive, Intransitive and Transitive Verbs?
5. By what is the number of Moods, Tenses and parts of Speech limited? how many do we have of each?
6. Give the Imperfect tense of the Indicative and Potential Moods of the Passive voice of the verb to be.
7. Have Arithmetic and Grammar the same standard of correctness? if not, how do they therein differ?
8. Correct, if necessary, the following sentences: "We should profit from the experience of others." "They insist on it that you are wrong." "Satin feels very smooth." "I never thought of it being him." "Did he arrive safely?" "The ship lays in the harbor." "It might have been her."

(D.)

GEOGRAPHY.

1. What is the Ocean? and what its divisions? and why?
2. Which are the Gulf States, Atlantic States, Middle and New England States?
3. What effects are produced by mountains?
4. How do differences in Latitude and Longitude affect climate?
5. Describe the principal physical features of North America.
6. Mention the various proofs of the sphericity of the earth.
7. Bound Florida, Oregon, Texas, Maine and Wisconsin.
8. What large rivers on the western coast of North America and South America? and why so few?

HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES.

1. Sketch the History of Fort Sumpter.
2. Mention five of the most prominent actors in the Revolution.
3. Give the most important events in the year 1776.
4. What was the "Stamp Act"?
5. When, from whom, and how was Louisiana Territory acquired?
6. When, for what, and with what results was the Mexican war carried on?
7. How were the United States governed previous to the adoption of the present Constitution?
8. Describe the surrender of Burgoyne.

ARITHMETIC.

1. State and demonstrate the process of Division, defining all the terms used.
2. What number is that whose $\frac{1}{3} + \frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{5} = 128$?
3. A. can do certain work in four days, B. in six days, C. in five days; in what time can all do half the work?
4. Define Unit, Ratio, Discount, Present worth.
5. To what is the product of the means in a proportion equal? and why?
6. Give the Vermont rule for the computation of interest.
7. How many bushels of wheat will a box hold that will contain a cord and one-quarter of dry wood?
8. Define Fractions, and demonstrate the process of dividing fractions.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY OF VERMONT.

1. Describe the Battle of Bennington.
2. Sketch the capture of Ticonderoga, in the Revolutionary war.
3. What is the Council of Censors? what do they do? how chosen? when do they meet.
4. How does Vermont compare in Agricultural capacity with the Western States?
5. Locate the various Counties in Vermont.
6. Name the Rivers emptying into Lakes Champlain and Memphremagog.
7. How do the waters of Western Vermont reach the ocean?
8. How is school culture legally insured to every child in Vermont?

GENERAL QUESTIONS AS TO TEACHING.

1. How best teach Mental Arithmetic?
2. What general method would you adopt in teaching Reading?
3. What do you understand by Topical Recitation?
4. In what cases would you inflict corporal punishment?
5. Of what use are questions in School Text Books?
6. What are the obligations of the teacher in regard to the moral culture of scholars?
7. How best teach Spelling?
8. When and how should the teacher assist the pupil in mastering his lesson?

GRAMMAR.

1. Define Adverb, Preposition, Conjunction.
2. State the difference between the Indicative and Subjunctive moods.
3. Give the perfect tense, third person plural, in all the moods of the verbs go, take, see, hear, like, fight, ought.
4. What part of speech is "that"?
5. Correct, if necessary, "Between you and I, the fact is so"—"you and not I am in the wrong"?—"The larger portion of the army were killed."
6. Parse "The mountains looked beautiful."
7. Define "Analysis," "Parsing," "Spelling," "Prosody."
8. Give three sentences in common use in general conversation, that each contains grammatical errors.

(E.)

GEOGRAPHY.

1. Name the Gulf States in the order of their size, beginning with the smallest.
2. Name the five largest Rivers, Cities and Lakes on the globe
3. What controls the direction of the rivers in Europe, Asia, Africa?
4. Give the difference in Latitude and Longitude between Baltimore and Salt Lake City.

5. Describe the Amoor, the Hoang Ho, the Danube, the Nile, the St. Lawrence.
6. Bound the Pacific States.
7. In what direction from here are New Orleans, Rio Janeiro, Cape Town, Calcutta, Sitka?
8. Name the principal Imports and Exports of the United States.

GRAMMAR.

1. Change the number of Axis, Flag-staff, Father-in-law, Vinegar, Vertebra, Beau, Foci, Phenomena, Victuals, Index, Genius, Stimulus.
2. What parts of speech are susceptible of being compared? How compare them?
3. Define and describe the functions of Participles.
4. State distinctly the difference between Adjectives and Adverbs, in their characters and uses.
5. Name ten irregular verbs.
6. Give an Intransitive Neuter Verb in the Present tense, Indicative mood.
7. What is the difference between Prose and Poetry?
8. What is the standard of excellence in Grammar? what is meant by Classical English?

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY OF VERMONT.

1. What was the Legislative System of Vermont previous to 1825?
2. What was the character of the early settlers of Vermont? where were they from?
3. What was peculiar in the situation of Vermont during the Revolution?
4. What portions of the State were first settled?
5. Into what basins do the rivers of Vermont flow?
6. What Railroads traverse Vermont?
7. Sketch the Battle of Hubbardton.
8. Bound the Counties in this Congressional District.

GENERAL QUESTIONS AS TO TEACHING.

1. Give a definition of Education and explain its true purposes.
2. How would you inspire your pupils with a patriotic love of their own State and Country?
3. How lead your pupils to engage in frequent exercises in Composition?
4. Are Arithmetic and Geography of the same nature, and to be taught in the same way? if not, how?
5. When do you consider a school to be well disciplined?
6. State your views of the necessity of thoroughness in early culture.
7. How may the physical health and development of children be advanced in the school?
8. How often are punishments necessary in School? and of what description?

ARITHMETIC.

1. Define Units, Notation, Numeration, Duodecimals, Annuities, Present worth, Involution, Evolution.
2. Compare fully Multiplication and Division.
3. Divide \$1,000 between five men so that the shares of each shall regularly increase, and the third man receive two-thirds as much as the first and last together.
4. What are Prime, Denominate, Abstract, Concrete, Composite and Simple Numbers?
5. Find two sums of money, the amount of one of which at simple interest for three years, shall equal the amount of the other at compound interest for the same time.

6. How reduce English money to Federal money by inspection ? and why ?
7. Demonstrate fully the process of Division of Fractions.
8. What is Alligation ? state and demonstrate the process.

HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES.

1. Describe the incidents attending the death of Nathan Hale.
2. Sketch the Battle of Plattsburgh.
3. Who was Gen. John Stark ? what did he do ?
4. When and where was the decisive battle of the Revolution ?
5. What rights did the Seceding States claim ?
6. Who was Benjamin Franklin ? what did he accomplish in Science and in Politics ?
7. What was the attitude of the European Governments towards the Government of the United States during the continuance of the Rebellion ? what were the exceptions ?
8. What effects, political and material, resulted from the invention of the Cotton Gin ?

(F.)

HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES.

1. What happened to the City of Washington in the war of 1812 ?
2. Compare the settlers of New England, Virginia, Maryland and the Carolinas.
3. Describe the treason of Arnold.
4. What prominent battle of the war of 1812 was fought on the confines of Vermont ?
5. Mention five prominent members of the first Congress.
6. Who was Patrick Henry ?
7. When was Slavery introduced ? when did it cease ?
8. State the differences between the Federal Constitution and the Articles of Confederation.

GRAMMAR.

1. Define Verb, Participle, Comparison, Gender, Case, Mood, Voice, Syntax, Prosody, Tense.
2. Give the principal parts of the verbs Sit, Shrink, Catch, Go, Do, Shake, Wring and Teach.
3. Give the possessive singular of all the Personal Pronouns.
4. What is the Progressive Form of a verb ?
5. What is the Objective Case ? when used ?
6. What is Analysis ? how different from Parsing ?
7. When does a common noun become proper ?
8. Give the second person plural in all the moods and tenses of the verbs Try, Show, Teach, Go and Be.

GENERAL QUESTIONS AS TO TEACHING.

1. State your opinion of severity in enforcing discipline.
2. What is the relative importance of Reading ?
3. How may gymnastic exercises be profitably introduced into the common school ?
4. State your opinion of the value of Black-boards and Outline Maps.
5. How secure the attention of classes at recitation ?
6. How induce an interest in the study of Grammar ?
7. Of what use would you make a Globe ?
8. What is the proper use of text-books in schools ?

GEOGRAPHY.

1. Describe the Ural, the Alps, the Carpathian and the Atlas Mountains?
2. Does the location and operation of the Gulf of Mexico affect the climate of Europe? and how?
3. What cause the Atmospheric Currents?
4. Explain the long days and nights in the Polar regions.
5. Where are Tea, Coffee, Spices, Cocoa, Rice, Tobacco, Indigo, Oranges, Potatoes, Yams and Figs produced?
6. Compare Africa and South America as to Mineral and Vegetable productions.
7. What is the prominent physical feature of Africa?
8. Where are Ivory, Whalebone, Gold, Iron, Tin, Pearls and Precious Stones produced?

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY OF VERMONT.

1. Where in Vermont does Granite abound?
2. Where are Slate, Marble, Copper, and Iron found?
3. State the provision of the Vermont Constitution securing Religious Liberty.
4. Bound the interior Counties of Vermont.
5. Describe the four largest Rivers.
6. What is the leading occupation of the people in Vermont?
7. Mention the four largest Lakes and Ponds.
8. Has Vermont more or less Manufactures and Commerce than neighboring States? why? what is the effect?

ARITHMETIC.

1. What is Reduction? of what use?
2. Reduce $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours to lower denominations, and add to it one-seventeenth of four days.
3. I paid \$1.750 for goods, and keeping them 18 months, desire to sell them for 12 per cent. advance upon cost and interest; for what sum should I sell?
4. How many pecks in a beer barrel?
5. How many bushels of oats weigh a ton?
6. How much wheat will run through a $1\frac{1}{4}$ -inch auger hole in two days, at the rate of 7 feet in four seconds?
7. Demonstrate the process for Addition.
8. Prove that the multiplication or division of both terms of a fraction by the same quantity does not change its value.

I have inserted the questions that were actually used in order to afford the fullest possible opportunity to all interested to come to an intelligent judgment as to the practicability of so administering the law as to effect the design therein embodied. In all examinations, in order to entitle an applicant to a certificate, the examination papers required correct answers to be returned to three-fourths of the questions in each branch; but from the first, in actual practice, notice was given that fifty per cent. of correctness would be accepted in two of the branches, viz: "History and Constitution of the United States," and "Geography and History of Vermont." This was done from a very strong conviction that an exacting of seventy-five per cent. of correctness in these two branches, would exclude nearly every teacher in the State from all possibility of receiving a certificate during the year. And the result fully vindicated the correctness of the conviction.

In order to guard against all imputations of unfairness or lack of

impartiality, all answers to questions were retained, and all were notified that in case any question should arise as to the equity of the decision of the Committee, both questions and answers might be published.

The law did not originate with me, and I had never, except incidentally, recommended it; and while I had no doubt that some measures ought, as soon as possible, to be taken to elevate the standard of qualifications of teachers, I was not at all certain that the law, as it stood, was adapted to do the work intended, and to do it acceptably.

Realizing fully the vast importance of the movement, but with no previous predilections in favor of this particular law, and perfectly conscious of the innumerable difficulties in the way, I endeavored to give the law a fair opportunity, and I am prepared to say, from the experience of one year's work, that there is in the law a great capacity to work out good results.

Before judging of the probable efficacy and adaptation of the law, by its results, as developed in actual operation, it will, of course, be necessary to ascertain whether the questions propounded were sufficiently numerous and searching to constitute a proper test of qualification, in view of the real purpose of the law, and of the circumstances under which it was to be put in operation.

Among the prominent circumstances that would attend and strongly operate upon the determination as to the rigidity that should be given to the examination, stand prominently the widely prevalent tendency to frequent change of teachers, and consequent lack of permanent employment; the very general habit in all parts of the State of preferring a cheap teacher at a low rate of compensation, to a competent teacher at reasonable wages; and the indifference of most, with the ignorance of many of the people as to the actual competence of the teachers employed by themselves—an ignorance and indifference that had been fostered by the inefficiency of local examinations.

Again, the evident purpose of the law was, not to provide an examination that should at one leap vault to a standard of qualification that should suffice as a permanent standard for all future exigencies, but by gradual steps to reach a standard of excellence appropriate for the teachers of the schools of a republican State. This is evident from the fact that the law insures the validity of certificates of the local authorities for five years after the passage of the law.

In full view of all these, and many other considerations not mentioned, the scheme of examination herein quoted was constructed and adopted. It is of the greatest importance that the examination should always be so conducted as to win the approval of an intelligent public sentiment; for, in order to enable the plan to work out any very good results, it must be strengthened in actual operation by the positive sympathy and support of the people.

That the publication of the questions will elicit a diversity of opinions as to their character and adaptation, is expected; many will think them

too simple, some will consider them too difficult, and very few will, as a whole, approve them. But whoever will give the subject calm consideration, will be satisfied, I think, that the preparation of questions to test the general capacity and knowledge of teachers in a given branch of study, without transcending the limits that necessity will prescribe as to number, is a very delicate and difficult thing. To test by eight or ten questions and answers, the capacity of a person to teach Geography or Arithmetic, is no very easy matter, as will appear to the most skeptical upon actual trial.

So little time was, by the late passage of the law, allowed, that the questions are far less perfect than will be easily constructed by whoever may have the matter in charge in the future, with more time for thought and labor.

In order that the real intent of the law, which purposes to secure a gradual elevation of the standard of qualification for teachers, might be carried out by the operation of its administration as fully as possible, after the examinations in all the Counties were finished, I furnished to teachers, superintendents and citizens, who applied for them, copies of the questions used; and it is partly in furtherance of the same design that they are inserted in the Annual Report. Thus the questions, having served their principal purpose in the examinations, will pass into use by the local superintendents and by teachers, and in this way new questions being provided, increasing in difficulty and scope each year, when the five years mentioned in the law shall have elapsed, the local examinations, as well as the private studies of the teachers in view of the questions that have been asked, will inevitably secure, by gradual steps, an ultimate elevation of the standard of qualifications of teachers, which is desired.

It is interesting, now that the year's work is done, to look over the records, and from them and from the correspondence in reference to the examinations, to note the various revelations that appear. It may be well to call attention here to some of the facts and results and opinions thus appearing.

The statistics show that four thousand seven hundred and twenty-two different teachers were employed during the last school year, and of this large number, only two hundred and sixteen applied for examination. This fact shows the existence among the teachers of very great distrust of their own qualifications; and the fact that of the two hundred and sixteen who did apply, only fifty received certificates, exhibits the existence of good ground for such distrust.

While a good number of the more experienced and abler teachers applied for examination, a large proportion of that class did not present themselves. It is noticeable, also, that among those who received certificates, quite a large number, relatively, were young, and had little experience in actual teaching.

However strong may be the impression with many, upon the inspection of the questions, that they are too simple and easily answered, such

impression will be shaken by the comparatively small number of certificates granted, particularly when it is known that in all cases the entire day—from nine in the morning till half-past four in the afternoon, was given in which to answer the questions. And yet few who appreciate the importance to all of the right performance of the teacher's work, will be prepared to say that a certificate to teach anywhere within the State, for five years, should issue to any one who cannot answer the required proportion of the questions upon either of the lists.

The varying character of the responses with which the operation of the law was attended, was likewise noticeable. Many teachers, tolerably posted in the usual text-books, meeting few of the stereotyped questions that abound in the books, and are customary in all examinations, were deeply impressed by the simplicity and stupidity of the questions; and on the other hand, very many of the more thoughtful teachers expressed their delight at the inauguration of the new system. On one occasion, in one of the northern counties, one of the ablest professional men, who had formerly taught, came into the room and taking a series of questions, worked all day with the teachers, and at the close presented his answers, with the assertion that he considered the day's work, in an intellectual view, as the best he had ever done.

I am of the opinion that the better class of the teachers, as a body, are well satisfied with the law, although it is not to be denied that, judging from the correspondence of this office, many are dissatisfied, both with the law and the method of operating it, exhibited in the examinations of the year. It is quite probable that many of this last class never will be pleased with any mode of examination that should be at all searching in its character.

The extracts, quoted in the Report, from the returns of Superintendents, show a similar diversity of views. The larger part of the Town Superintendents express great pleasure in the prospect of the benefits to the schools which they anticipate from the greater uniformity and thoroughness that will result from a faithful administration of the new law. But while many congratulate themselves and their colleagues upon the relief to be afforded, when the new law shall come into operation, from a most onerous and ungrateful task, there are some who seem to doubt the possibility of operating the law so as to give satisfaction to the people or the teachers. And there is another class of the Superintendents who seem to regard the law with extreme jealousy, and consider it in the light of an infringement upon their peculiar functions, and as aimed at the ultimate extinction of the office of Town Superintendent.

It never will be denied that when as good as any other, local supervision of public schools is far preferable to any other. But while in a few of the towns the local supervision in the examination of teachers has been sufficient and thorough, and better adapted to the wants of the communities than the best conceivable general supervision could be,—doing its work as effectively and far more satisfactory than it

could be done in any other way; still, this has been the case in only a very few of the towns; and all the time, for years, within the knowledge of every intelligent citizen, in by far the greater proportion of towns, there has been no searching and reliable examination of teachers; and the habits of teachers are so migratory, and the habit of changing teachers so universal, that the carelessness of one community injuriously affects the whole.

But it is said that, unless the Superintendent has power to revoke certificates, all the sanction and force is taken from any advice he may give the teacher, who, relieved from dread of revocation of his certificate, will disregard the interference of the local Superintendent. In reply to this it may be said, that the revocation of a teacher's certificate, or even the refusal to grant one upon an examination that discloses a lack of competence to teach, is so ungracious and unpleasant, that but very few instances have occurred in the State, although the expediency and propriety of such action has often been manifest. Hence appears the necessity for a supervisory power that shall be free from the hindrances and obstructions that always beset local supervision, and thus can act with equal justice and much more independence.

Again, as the revocation of a certificate issued under the authority of the Board of Education, and availing throughout the State, should emanate from the same authority, and under its control and direction, it is true that the Local Superintendent will probably never have the power to revoke a certificate granted by the Board directly; but on the other hand, the Board will always pay special deference to the suggestions and recommendations of the Local Superintendent, and whenever revocation of a certificate is really merited, the Local Superintendent who would shrink from incurring the odium of a revocation upon his sole responsibility, would freely advise the Board to a course for which they alone would be responsible.

The various functions of the Superintendents are but very slightly interfered with by the present law; their powers, duties, rights, and responsibilities remain untouched by the recent enactment, except that in five years they will be entirely relieved from the necessity of examining teachers, and in this no intention or desire to extinguish or belittle the office of Town Superintendent is discernable.

And, furthermore, the law is claimed to be, and in fact is, only an experiment, and, as will appear upon the most cursory inspection, evidently contemplates further legislation, as the operation of the law in practice shall disclose the necessity of such legislation from time to time.

Going at once into operation, under very unfavorable circumstances, and without any opportunity for preparing public sentiment or the teachers for such a radical change, as important as it was unexpected, I am in duty bound to say, after operating it in every County in the State, that it works very much better than I had expected or even hoped. The teachers in every part of the State have been thoroughly

aroused, and in many cases fairly startled out of their careless indifference, and many, very many, mortified and astonished at the revelations of the examination, are preparing themselves for better work in the future.

But the most remarkable feature of the law, is its unexpected power, when properly called out, to arouse a deep and strong interest in the minds of the people. The method, during the year, has been to devote the first half day of each Institute almost exclusively to the examination of teachers. The applicants were gathered together in one corner of the audience room, and each received a series of written questions, and when fairly at work, one series of questions has been read aloud to the audience, calling their attention to the nature and tendency of the questions. After a short recess, another and still another have been read, with such oral comments and suggestions as seemed appropriate. Knowing that citizens as well as teachers were somewhat taken by surprise by the enactment of the law and its immediately being carried into actual operation, some such method was deemed essential in order to secure to the law a fair opportunity to vindicate its own capacity, and the results were wonderful. Intelligent audiences seemed readily and rapidly won over to a very decided approval of the working of the law. Often a large audience has for hours displayed an increasing interest in these examinations, and I am confident that much of good has resulted from the public examinations of the year.

But a year's experience has sufficed to show the necessity of a change in the method of operating the law. A whole day will be required for an examination in the first course alone, and therefore it will be necessary that an additional day be taken for the Institutes. In every examination held, the larger portion of the applicants required the whole day for the completion of their answers to the questions proposed.

I have also become satisfied that the examination at the Institutes should be confined to the first or lower course, and that no examination be required in the higher course. There has not been a single application during the year, at the Institutes, for an examination in the higher course of study, and there will never be very many. An inspection of the higher courses of study, as the same was prepared by your Hon. Board, and as it appears in your report, will convince any one conversant with such things, that very few will ever attempt to pass an examination therein who have not prepared themselves therefor by careful study in some Normal or other School of high grade.

After such inspection, it will also appear that it will be no easy matter to find in each County, as the law requires, "two or more practical educators," who are competent to act as a Committee of Examination in a course of study so comprehensive and so varied.

As soon as was practicable, after the acceptance of the proposi-

tions from the Orange County Grammar School at Randolph, and the Lamoille County Grammar School at Johnson, by the Board of Education, as is mentioned in the Report of the Board, arrangements were made for the opening of these schools under new auspices, as State Normal Schools.

Both schools were opened for the reception of pupils in the latter part of February, and examinations for admission were held in accordance with the regulations of the Board.

The qualifications for admission to the Normal Schools of the State, as established by the Board of Education, are as follows:

"For admission to any of the State Normal Schools, the candidates must pass a satisfactory examination in Arithmetic through the ground rules as applied to simple and compound numbers, through fractions, both common and decimal.

"In Geography, applicants must know the general natural divisions of land and water, the political divisions of the earth, and the general geography of Vermont.

"In Grammar, applicants must be acquainted with grammatical definitions and inflections, and with the parsing and analysis of simple sentences."

Written questions were prepared in all the branches named, and examinations were held, in which, in order to admission, applicants were required to answer correctly at least one-half of the questions proposed.

Conversant with the many allegations so often made, that a standard of excellence would be adopted for admission to the Normal Schools, so high as practically to exclude large classes of pupils who would desire to attend them; it was determined in the first instance to put down the standard of admission as low as was at all consistent with the special character of the schools, and with the possibility of their accomplishing their legitimate and appointed work.

It is important that all interested in the progress of these schools should not only have reasonable confidence that the examinations will be conducted so as to give the largest possible opportunity to all to avail themselves of the advantages afforded by the State Normal Schools, but that all should know positively, that the examinations are conducted in such manner as to admit all who can be admitted with any reasonable hope of benefit to them, and safety to the school. In order to give this opportunity for certain knowledge, as to the method in which these examinations were conducted, and the spirit which animated their management, it is deemed best to copy here, one or two series of questions actually used in the examinations, held at the beginning of the Fall Terms of the Normal Schools in August and September, A. D. 1867:—

ENGLISH GRAMMAR. (C.)

1. Define grammar, etymology, and syntax.
2. What is the case and number of I, him, thee, them, kings, whom, ladies?
3. When is a noun in the objective case?
4. What is a transitive verb?
5. Write two sentences containing each a transitive verb, and two containing each an intransitive verb?
6. Define noun, adjective, conjunction.
7. Define thou, horse, man, money, who.
8. Parse all the words in "You should not keep bad company."
9. Give the principal parts of ride, sleep, stand, stick, learn.
10. Write five sentences, each containing a pronoun and a preposition.

ENGLISH GRAMMAR. (D.)

1. Define noun, pronoun, adverb, conjunction.
2. What numbers and persons have nouns and pronouns?
3. Define adjective, preposition, article, verb.
4. What words are called articles?
5. What verbs have the passive voice?
6. What is an intransitive verb?
7. Correct "They is to blame" and give the rule for the correction. Parse "to blame."
8. Compare simple, studious, much, ill.
9. Give me tense signs of the potential mode, present tense, and imperfect tense.
10. Write five sentences each containing an adjective and an adverb.

ARITHMETIC. (A.)

1. Write in figures: Seventeen million; five million one hundred ninety-seven thousand forty-four; three trillion one billion twenty-eight million six thousand seventy-five.
2. Write in words: 786, 948, 106, 678938632, 567891273.
3. Define addition, subtraction, sum, difference, minuend, subtrahend, part. (Remainder of Arithmetic questions mislaid.)

ARITHMETIC. (B.)

1. Write in figures: Thirty-nine million, forty-eight thousand, six hundred seventy-two; eighty million one hundred seven thousand one.
2. Write in words: 146789103; 923678945; 7890067897.
3. Add 344, 676, 898, 269, 833, 456, 639, 967, 844, 923, 122, 161, 913, 284, 275, 677, 769, 943, 876, 733, 51, 214, 323, 876, 687.
4. Multiply 86041 by 70609.
5. Divide 638942 by 629.
6. Define multiply, divide, factor, product, common divisor, common multiple, fraction.
7. Divide 8648 rods, 3 yds., 1 ft., 11 in., by 11.
8. Find the least common multiple of 15, 35, 70, 100, 120.
9. Reduce $\frac{17}{51}$, $\frac{2}{24}$, $\frac{36}{48}$, $\frac{12}{42}$ to lowest terms.
10. What is the sum of $\frac{1}{2} + \frac{2}{3} + \frac{3}{7} \times \frac{5}{6}$?

GEOGRAPHY. (A.)

1. What is the axis of the Earth?
2. What grand divisions of land extend farthest north? What farthest south?
3. What divisions of South America border the Caribbean Sea? The Atlantic Ocean? The Pacific Ocean?

4. Name the States lying between the Mississippi River and the Rocky Mountains
5. Name the States lying between the Ohio and the Mississippi River and the Great Lakes.
6. What rivers separate Vermont from New Hampshire? Maryland from Virginia? South Carolina from Georgia? Texas from Mexico?
7. Name four bays and four capes on the East Coast of the United States.
8. Name the Counties in Vermont bordering on Canada, and those bordering on Massachusetts.
9. Name five rivers of Vermont along the banks of which railroads are built.
10. Name the grand divisions of land bordering on the Mediterranean Sea, and three important rivers emptying into it.

GEOGRAPHY. (B.)

1. Name the Countries of Europe that border on the Mediterranean Sea.
2. Name the Seas on the Coast of Africa.
3. What grand divisions of land border on the Pacific Ocean?
4. Name five of the largest rivers in North America, and four of the largest in South America.
5. Name the States bordering on Lake Erie.
6. Name the Lakes bordering on Wisconsin.
7. Name six of the largest tributaries of the Mississippi River.
8. What countries border on the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea?
9. Name the four Southern Counties of Vermont.
10. Name seven of the largest rivers of Vermont.

Little argument seems necessary to convince any that the standard of qualifications, evinced by an ability to answer correctly at least one-half of the above questions in any series, is certainly not too high. But at every examination for admission to the Normal Schools, a necessity has been found to reject some applicants. And the above questions are inserted in order to give data for forming an intelligent opinion as to the character of the examinations as actually held, and thus prevent ill-founded opinions that will be injurious to the Schools.

I hope to receive from the Principals of both the Normal Schools, reports of the actual working of the Schools thus far, and insert them in the present Report.

The other "official doings" of which the law requires a statement to be made in the Annual Report, have been such as have heretofore customarily been required and performed, and have been discharged in due time. Repeated discussion has resulted in an increased appreciation, throughout the State, of the capacity of the State School System, as evinced particularly in its provision for graded Schools, and this has from time to time called for expositions, in various localities adapted to the support of these schools, of the peculiar characteristics and excellencies of schools of a higher grade. On this account, in order to respond to these expected demands, the educational discussions of the past year, as of two or three years previous, have been more largely occupied with the special topic of Graded

Schools, and of necessity have occurred more in the larger and less in the smaller towns than has usually been the case.

There have been four special and adjourned meetings of the Board during the year, made necessary by the requirements of recent legislation, which have occupied time. And by the law the Secretary is required to visit each of the Normal Schools four times annually.

CONDITION OF THE SCHOOLS.

In the performance of my official duty, by which an annual account of the condition of Schools and of the expenditure of the public money in their support is required, I shall endeavor to call attention to the more important practical points that have come under my own personal observation, or present themselves through consideration of the statistics, or appear in the official returns of the local Superintendents. But, before giving my own views of the condition of the schools as they appear to me, I desire attention to the following extracts selected from the reports of the Town Superintendents to this office. And here it should be premised, that the effort, as has been stated in former reports, is to so select from the various reports made, as to give the best practicable general view of the schools as they have appeared to the inspection of those who are specially charged with their superintendence in the various localities.

Many excellent reports are of necessity omitted, and occasionally reports are quoted, and in neither case on account of literary merit or demerit. The great object being to enable the Annual Report to reflect as accurately as possible, the opinions and judgment, and state the convictions generally prevalent, in reference to the schools, with the great body of the Superintendents; to show the schools through the eyes and understanding of their own official supervisors.

The statistical summary, and the results of my own observation, will appear subsequently.

Remarks of Superintendents.

Our common schools have been quite a success the past year. Committee-men are more interested, hence they employ better teachers. Fifteen of the nineteen teachers employed the last year were females, showing that female teachers, for small scholars, were preferred.

I think the enactments providing for Normal Schools should be sustained by all interested in the advancement of education. As regards the examination of teachers at Institutes, I am well pleased with the idea, knowing that many who are now employed as teachers in our common schools, that are incompetent, will no longer be a stumbling-block to the interests of the school, and in their places we will find active, intelligent teachers, who are ready and willing to work for the interest of the school.

O. R. GAGE, Addison.

I found the schools in very bad condition. In only one district was there any great interest in the schools. I tried to be faithful, but was not sustained by many of the people. We have made some changes. Two small districts have been united. The schools averaged some six or eight scholars each. It met with some opposition. In the village we have had two departments; this has proved a success; yet the people will not, or are not, willing to pay for two departments. Last night the village district elected three men who have no children and no interest in schools. They instructed the committee to hire the cheapest teachers. The number of scholars in the district is one hundred.

I was relieved of my office the first Tuesday in March. Some were displeased with me for rejecting teachers; others for making changes; and yet others for increasing expenses. There was no contest for the office. I was glad to be relieved, for I have spent a great deal of time, and been to some expense, besides being constantly annoyed. I have made about fifty visits during the year. The town gave me no remuneration; I ought to receive at least twenty-five dollars, for I have lectured some in the district, and worked hard.

I think there are many encouraging features in respect to education here. The triumph of opposers will be short. The schools in many parts of the town have improved during the year. There is more interest in the cause of education than I have ever seen here before. The Institute quickened the friends of education as well as its enemies. There was an article in the warning for the Town Meeting in regard to the "State Normal School," but as we had heard nothing from you, it was laid over. I think the town would have made a very liberal appropriation.

I think the design of education is discipline of the mind: hence one lesson thoroughly learned is worth more than twelve imperfect lessons. We do not send our pupils to school so much to get knowledge as to learn how to use it. I find in these mountain towns some of the brightest intellects. It is worth while to develop and cultivate them, and he does the world a service who helps to advance the cause of education.

My experience as superintendent has been so short that my impression and views would not be worth much to you. The only way to create interest in the cause of education is to agitate the subject. Teachers' Institutes are calculated to do this, and I think the one held here last winter will not be fruitless in its results. Vermont is not wanting in talent or wealth to be the first State in the

Union for enterprise and intelligence; but my observation goes to prove that several States are ahead of us in common school education. But I hope that five years from this time this cannot be said. The signs are more favorable than ever before. With the kindest regards for yourself, and the deepest interest in your noble work, I am, &c.

GEO. L. GLEASON, Bristol.

With a few exceptions, the Registers have been well kept by teachers the past year. Clerks have generally answered the interrogatories to them correctly and fully.

As far as I am enabled to judge, Teachers' Institutes please, interest, and entertain all classes, and exert a highly beneficial influence upon teachers, parents, and others interested in our common schools.

The recent legislation, in reference to boarding around, is very generally, perhaps universally, approved by teachers, but does not receive the general approval of the people of this town.

Although our schools are far from having attained to that degree of excellence which is desirable and necessary in order to make them what they ought to be, still I think they are surely and unmistakeably improving and growing better. An improvement in text books, and in the mode of teaching, has greatly simplified and made comparatively easy the study of the branches usually taught in common schools. What was once a dry, irksome, and much dreaded task, may be now regarded as a pleasing and interesting exercise. A pupil may acquire a correct and thorough knowledge of any and all branches now taught, in much less time than could possibly have been obtained in former years. But the obstinate, conservative, doggedly clinging to notions and customs of the past remain as stationary as the mile-stone, asserting that in all changes there is no improvement—that man, instead of advancing, is degenerating—that the world does not move; will tell you that “our schools are no better than they used to be.” With all due deference and respect to such venerable, inexcusably blind (if honest) conservative friend, I must tell him that he is wholly mistaken, and to prove the truth of my assertion, I will take almost any scholar of fifteen years, who has had good common school advantages, and compare him with the scholar of “the school that used to be.” I have no hesitation in saying that a pupil can and does acquire a better and more thorough knowledge of the branches now taught in the common schools of to-day, at the age of 15, than the scholar of 20 years, did, in “the schools that used to be.” And why? Not because the scholar of the present can acquire more readily, is brighter, or possesses greater mental capacity, but because of the improvement in text-books, and more competent teachers, and our improved system of schools.

Most of the teachers employed the past year have discharged their duties with credit to themselves and the benefit of the scholars. Some have shown themselves excellent teachers. The incompetent, inefficient teachers are the exception and not the rule.

The school houses generally are not what they should be. Some are first class houses; some are in good condition, whilst others are totally unfit for use. Not one is furnished as it ought to be. Instead of Globes, Outline Maps, Thermometers, Clocks and Dictionaries, there are only small white black-boards. There is general indifference and remissness on the part of parents and others who ought to exercise a constant care and watchfulness over the school. They should make frequent visits to the school-room, and thereby learn what the general management and conduct of the school is. By so doing they will cheer and encourage both teacher and scholar, and make themselves competent judges of the merits or demerits of the teacher, and of the worth or worthlessness of the school. In the selection of good teachers, much depends upon Committees. Not every one who “possesses a good moral character,” and the requisite scholarship to “pass an examination,” is a successful teacher. There are many

"grains of sense" and much truth in the trite but homely remark, that some are nat'ral teachers.

I would advise Committees to procure the best teachers that they can get, and retain them. Our schools suffer from too frequent change.

J. W. BARNES, Ferrisburgh.

In giving my report of this town I must say that my statistical report is incorrect owing to the neglect of district clerks in making accurate statements in regard to expenditures of the different districts. Not a single Register is accurately made up by district clerks. There have been no failure in teachers making true reports.

The schools in this town have been in a prosperous condition during the past year. Out of twenty-four terms there has been but one failure. Owing to the increase of population and the great interest manifested in the present school system, our numbers have been swelled to that extent that there is not a school house in town large enough to accommodate and secure to each member an unlimited chance of study. There is one item wanted in the school law. Parents ought to be compelled, as far as practicable, to send their children to school. Inasmuch as each town is compelled to support a school, it is no more than reasonable that we make a law compelling them so to do.

A. A. HIER, Lincoln.

I think every school house should be made as attractive as possible, and furnished with a Globe, Outline Maps, Numeral Frame, Cubic Root Blocks, and Orrery, at least. These would amply pay for themselves in one year. I hope to be able to report more progress in the way of supplying our schools with these much needed articles another year.

We have had female teachers, mostly, for the past year. The greatest trouble of our schools has been want of government; this I find to be a general complaint. Where is the remedy? Volumes might be written on the lacks and abuses of our public school; but who shall come forward and say, "I have the antidote."

There can be but one answer in regard to school Registers, Teachers' Institutes, and reports, viz: good. Of the Institutes, and Reports, give us more of them, and we will be better satisfied.

The recent legislation in regard to boarding around I heartily approve. Some of our districts still follow the old plan of boarding around, considering it a restriction of their rights to be compelled to board the teacher at one place. The time will come, and that soon, I hope, when boarding around will be among the antiquities.

Too much cannot be done in regard to greater thoroughness in elementary instruction. When we consider that first impressions are more lasting than any afterwards received, how important it is that this part of our education should be of the right kind, and thorough.

The recent legislation in regard to examination of teachers at the Institutes I think will result in great good to our common schools. It will have a tendency to bring forth our best teachers, and destroy the competition of second and third class teachers. Teachers wages will be something more than a mocking, and our teachers can then teach in their native State.

There is some opposition to this law, as well as all laws for the general good of the community, at first. I think this will work out its full salvation if fairly tested.

R. C. WARD, Orwell.

I did not have an opportunity to attend the Teachers' Institute held at Bristol, although very desirous of doing so. So far as my observation of their results upon those who have attended them, goes, I am favorably inclined toward them. Most of our schools the past year have been good. I thought I saw a more

earnest effort on the part of the teachers, who attended the Institute the past winter, to be thorough, and to secure greater interest among the pupils over whom they had charge after their return than was witnessed before.

S. T. ALLEN, Pantton.

I do not doubt "the importance of greater thoroughness in elementary instruction." To promote this in the art of Reading and Grammar, I know of no books that seem to me by any means equal to the various Readers and Grammars prepared by Tower, and especially his elementary books on each subject. The Elementary Grammar is now in use.

From the fact that the State law requires that the teachers of the school under its patronage should be persons of good moral character, it seems fair to infer that the State has some regard to good morals. But as the Board of Education, in their authoritative list of Text Books for the District Schools of Vermont, have placed on it no book of instruction in morals, it seems *not less* fair to infer, that in view of the Board, the subject itself was either of no importance or was too sectarian to be properly introduced into schools supported by the State.

If this is not the view of the subject taken by the Board, why should they not place on their next Authoritative List of Text Books, some book that should give instruction in morals, as well as in reading and cyphering? And why not, at least, till they can find and agree upon a better,—why not take the old fashioned King James' Bible, which is thought by many people, especially those most acquainted with it, to be a useful book on that subject.

As things now stand, if the children and youth who are trained in the district schools of the State grow up in possession of that moral character which our Legislators have seemed to think desirable in our teachers, small thanks for it, will be due to those whom they have intrusted with the responsibility of preparing an Authoritative List of Text Books. Is it desirable that the District Schools of the State of Vermont should aid in the formation of "good moral character"? And if so, is it not quite as important that their teachers should have the authority of the State Board of Education to introduce a suitable book or system of morals, as it is, that they should be instructed what books to use in teaching the three "Rs"?

In my present apprehension, the new law, proposing that after five years no teacher shall be employed in the district schools who shall not obtain a certificate from the Teachers' Institute, or the Normal School, does not appear in harmony with Republican or Democratic Institutions, and I doubt whether it will be sustained.

So far as has come to my knowledge, the arrangement of the law for teachers to board in one place, is acquiesced in, without much objection, though in one of our districts the old way is continued.

C. H. KENT, Ripton.

In submitting my second annual report I am happy to have it in my power to say, that our schools are in a very satisfactory condition. There has been some difficulty in consequence of the employment of inexperienced teachers; but taken collectively, we have had teachers of large experience, some of them having taught more than twenty terms, and nearly all more than three years.

I would recommend to the people, and more particularly to committees, to exercise great care in the selection of teachers. Many times teachers come well recommended by friends, and pass a fair book examination, but the application of their knowledge in the school room, and the tact to manage, are sadly deficient,—qualifications which the superintendent has no very good means of judging until the school goes into operation.

Our school houses are all destitute of the necessary appurtenances, such as outline maps, globes, books of reference, &c. Their walls are as bare as the

forest oak stripped of its foliage by autumnal frosts. I would suggest that a law be made appropriating ten per cent. of the public money for the purpose of furnishing said appurtenances, and to procure district libraries. If the people would wake up to the subject of furnishing libraries of useful and entertaining books in every district, where they would be easy of access to the young, thereby cultivating a taste for reading and acquiring useful information, instead of so much time spent in frivolous amusement, the prospect of preserving the Republican institutions of America would be brighter. A majority of the people, and especially teachers, are growing in favor of the one place law for boarding.

In regard to the Teachers' Institutes, I find that the wide-awake teachers all attend them when they can; and all who go, return with new ideas. The examination of teachers at the Institutes will probably drive out a great deal of the incompetence that now unavoidably creeps in, and it will also deter many excellent teachers from entering the field because of their diffidence in appearing for examination in so public a manner. I think, however, it will be an improvement upon the present system.

We need, and have needed, the Normal Schools, where our young folks can qualify themselves in the business of teaching. I hope they will prove a success.

A. K. MARVIN, Salisbury.

It is a matter of congratulation that at last we are to have a system of Normal Schools, where those who desire to qualify themselves for teaching can do so. For, as the matter of common schools becomes more and more agitated, there will arise in communities a demand for a higher and better grade of schools, and with it, a desire to procure teachers who have been thoroughly trained to their calling. Then, we trust, the compensation for teaching will be sufficiently remunerative, so that the vocation of teaching may be a permanent instead of a temporary matter, as now. Exertion to bring teachers to a higher standard will be more effective in improving school education than any efforts at improving school books can possibly be. It is here where the great improvement must be sought. Without the coöperation of competent teachers, the greatest excellencies in any book will remain unnoticed and unimproved. The idea that they can "study and keep ahead of their classes," is an absurd one. They must have surveyed the whole field in order to conduct inquiries profitably over any part, or there will be liability to ruinous misdirection. Young and inexperienced teachers are little aware of their deficiencies in knowledge, and still less of the injurious effects which these deficiencies exert upon pupils who are often disgusted with school education, because they are made to see in it so little that is meaning and interesting. The tendency of our common schools is to reach at once towards that which is called the higher department of education, and neglect that which has the misfortune to be regarded as the lower; while it is obvious that the lower are at least equally important, if not absolutely necessary as a foundation for future progress. There have been scholars during the past winter studying Algebra and Natural Philosophy, whose knowledge of the elementary branches was not what it should be before taking up such studies. I do not wish to be understood as objecting to the introduction of these or any other class of studies so fast and so far as the actual wants and capacities of the scholars attending them may require. If the elementary studies are not of sufficient importance to be attended to in the common school, they will not be in the higher.

T. BROOKINS, Shoreham.

I was appointed Superintendent in December, by the Selectmen. I have charged only for the winter school.

I find the situation of the school houses throughout town any thing but pleasant, and in very bad repair generally. I think for the next school year

that I can get up more interest in the different districts; at least, I shall try hard to do so.

Register in District No. 12, not to be found. In District No. 1, not returned the number of families; neither the number of scholars between four and eighteen years of age.

It is almost impossible to get a true statement of attendance, tardiness, &c., &c., from the Registers, owing to the ignorance of the clerks, and carelessness of teachers, and I might say, ignorance also of the laws of the State in reference to Schools and School Registers.

WM. GREGORY, Starksboro.

I am happy to say that most of the Registers have been kept accurately. The schools in both districts show signs of improvement. The Graded School which has now been established about three years, has realized all the advantages that could be looked for in this time. Under the present excellent corps of teachers, there is a steady advancement in the standard of scholarship; and it is winning a good reputation from the neighboring towns. By the efforts of the teachers and friends of the school, several hundred dollars worth of maps and philosophical apparatus have been procured this year, and is made good use of already. But your late visit and warning words have had the good effect of stirring up the people as to the need of protecting their building and furniture against unnecessary injuries. They passed a stringent law about any damage that may be done by the pupils; and are now having quite thorough repairs done in the building and grounds before the beginning of another term.

I wish I could say as much for the other district. There the school house is not at all in good order, though habitable. The scholars are mostly French, and their parents very poor. While seventy children are reported in the district, the average attendance is 18 or 25 per cent. The annual school meeting numbers 6 to 8, and the usual experience follows—small taxes, and niggardly expenses. I notice that their public money the past year was double the sum they raised on the Grand List. I wish that district would unite with the other in the Graded School. But the distance, half a mile, would be an objection to many, and the increased taxes to more, I should judge.

All our teachers are paid *including board*, and I find it difficult to estimate the board in particular cases. I wish it could be reported in *full* without division. I am more than ever before amazed that some move is not made towards more equality of wages to male and female teachers. The disproportion is shameful, and yet Prudential Committees do not feel authorized to advance the pay of female teachers as long as there is a supply of good ones at lower rates. It seems to me that if we could have a system of good Normal Schools established, those who go out from there well fitted, might do more to establish more just rates, or go where such rates are paid. I have only received the Registers within a day or so; have had very little time to study them or correct them.

I like to visit the schools often, and do so when I have leisure; but I find I can only draw pay for two visits each year to each of our two districts. This hardly seems fair.

W. R. WOODBRIDGE, Vergennes.

As my official report to the town for the present year is not printed, I send the following extract as a substitute for any remarks I might otherwise make.

In all our district schools, with all the improvement that has been made, the standard of education already reached, it must be allowed, is still far below that which it should be.

As citizens, as parents and guardians—as those to whose care, experience and direction, the educational interests of the rising generation are entrusted, it becomes us to be more earnest, more zealous and more active than we have hitherto been, in every practicable way, to raise the standard of common school instruction in this town. And if we would succeed, we must employ *competent*

teachers, and no others. We must have teachers, not only of good moral character, and of suitable literary qualifications, but those also, who, in addition to this, have *experience*. Great caution should be used by Prudential Committees in the selection of *teachers*. This is a point of vital interest and importance as to the well being of our schools, and the success of our efforts to raise the standard of common school education.

It should ever be borne in mind, that next to the family it is in our common schools that the plastic minds of our children and youth are to be moulded and fashioned; and to receive a bias either for good or evil—that next to the family, it is in our district schools, that in early life a spirit is to be imbibed, and principles formed, that may, and probably will, to a greater or less degree, influence the character and conduct of the children, all the way through life. Let us see to it, then, that our common schools be made, in all respects, what they should be. Let us endeavor to make them fountains of light, and knowledge, and truth. Let us do all in our power to make them pure fountains, sending forth heal. hful streams for the promotion of the best good of our children and youth in every respect, that our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; and that our daughters may be as corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace.

SAML. W. COZZENS, Weybridge.

We have paid higher wages to teachers during the past year than ever before, and in most of the districts have had very excellent schools. This is also the first year in which all teachers in town have been boarded at one place. A few oppose, but the majority are in favor of it. I hope it will soon be the practice in every town in the State.

The importance of more thoroughness in elementary instruction can hardly be estimated, and those who have charge of this should have a large share of practical experience and adaptation for the business. I think the people of this community are becoming more solicitous in regard to the matter, and are more thoughtful to procure those teachers that have had experience, and reputation as good practical teachers, regardless of expense.

I am heartily in favor of the examination of teachers at the Institutes, and hope soon the practice of certificates given by Town Superintendents will be wholly done away, for I think we should be rid of a certain class of teachers who are unfit to teach. And I think the standard of qualification should be higher; and those who receive certificates from the Secretary should be such as it would be safe to employ in any town or district, and wages paid accordingly, that they might have encouragement to prepare themselves for the work.

The Institutes are of great practical benefit to teachers and friends of education, and all should be urged to attend them.

There is not a school house in town which we can say with propriety is fit for its purpose. We hope soon to report a different state of things.

W. H. CASEY, Whiting.

There is one thing in which this town, and, I think most towns, is very deficient. I refer to the necessary Globes, Maps, &c., with which every school house should be furnished. No school should be without them, and yet few schools possess them. A good Globe, with Outline Maps, is of more value to a school than any Geography; and a teacher, well qualified, will give a class better instruction with the Globe and Maps without any books, than can be given without the Globe and Maps with the books: at least, this has been my experience. I find many teachers well qualified as to the knowledge of the text-books, who are, nevertheless, entirely unqualified to teach school, for they have no knowledge or faculty for teaching anything beyond that. They seem to have no idea of the relative importance of events and places, and think it quite sufficient if they succeed in making their scholars commit to memory what is therein contained. They seem to know nothing of what is passing in the world around them. Con-

sequently, they can never awaken any interest in their scholars by any oral instruction, or by entering into conversation with them. I hope that the changes which have been made in our school laws will result in giving us a better class of teachers.

JAMES K. BATCHELDER, Arlington.

Many parents are so anxious to have their children *advance*, that they wish them to have book and studies, before they have mastered the more simple ones, particularly in Reading; and many children undertake to read in books much too hard for them. I think it a damage to them, and a source of trouble to the teacher. Spelling ought to be greatly encouraged; and I have thought the Spelling Books generally have not improved much since the old Webster's Spelling Book was in use. I think that the lessons ought to be so arranged that the accent shall fall on the same syllable of every word of the lesson: else, how can a little child know how to study the word, and study it right, without going to the teacher? In order to become good spellers, children need to study the words over and over, and fix them on the memory; and I think this will be done more readily where the words of the lesson have the same number of syllables, and the accent falls on the same syllable of each word. In some schools, I find many children without books, and we know they cannot progress much. Perhaps the method adopted by Massachusetts, to have books deposited by the town officers for the children at the very lowest wholesale price, would be good; and I would suggest that there be a fund of books in every town to give away to those unable to buy, upon the recommendation of the teacher and a judicious committee. What are a few dollars worth of books, when put in competition with the good to be effected in favor of the poor children of the State?

Then I find a vast number of tardy marks. I am surprised at the amount. How shall this be remedied? Also dismissals. Would it not be a good plan to offer a prize, in every school, of at least two or three dollars to the scholar who should have the least number at the close of the term, or at the close of the year? and also a smaller prize for the least number of dismissals, before the regular dismissals? Parents are greatly at fault in these things.

I am greatly in favor of School Institutes, and think the more the people and teachers attend them, the more they will be appreciated.

I am very glad the State has established a Normal School, which has long been needed for the more thorough training of teachers. I am not so fully established respecting the method proposed for granting licenses to teachers. Perhaps better teachers will be secured in the end, or in a few years. But some schools in remote places may find it very difficult to get teachers at all.

STEPHEN BINGHAM, Bennington.

The schools of the town, on the whole, have been doing well throughout the year. There have been two or three instances, however, during the past winter, in which schools have been somewhat injured by the interference of parents by taking sides with their children in opposition to teachers in regard to order in the school.

No school has been broken up or discontinued by the means, but in one instance a number of the children were withdrawn from the school before the middle of the term and not sent in again at all. There has been some spirited discussion as to the right of the teachers to inflict corporal punishment in any case; and I alluded to this matter in my annual report, stating what the law was, and what right the teacher had in such case. There seems to be a growing interest in the cause of education throughout the town. I never knew the school report listened to with such marked attention as it was at our last meeting. I think it would be of great service to us if we could have the next Institute for this county held in this town.

JOHN CURTIS, Dorset.

The Registers have been kept well, I should judge; some are kept very neatly, and returned in good order.

The Annual Reports are read only by comparatively a few. I think it would be a source of improvement to the teachers to read them more, if they would. I think it would be well for district clerks to furnish the report belonging to the District, to the teacher during the school term. Any thing a teacher will read relating to schools will tend to improve both teacher and school.

All the districts in town have given up the idea of the teacher's boarding around; some of them board in three or four places during the term. The board is set up at auction, four weeks at a time. Of course, different individuals bid it off. I think board at one place is and will be acceptable to the friends of the school law.

I think greater thoroughness in elementary instruction is very desirable, and teachers fail more in that part of their education than in any other. It should begin with the sound of the letters. Orthography should receive more attention in all our primary schools; and reading is not taught at all by more than half of the teachers. I do not mean they do not call the words in the reading books; they certainly go over six times as much as they should, by calling the words without reading, so as to get any sense of what the words convey, or imparting any to the hearer.

Superintendents do see, and parents would see, if they were to attend the examination of teachers and visited schools, the necessity and utility of some schools to prepare teachers to teach more to the acceptance of their employers, and credit to the profession. Normal schools should be made as popular and indispensable as law, medicine or theological schools are, and teaching be as much a profession as preaching or doctoring.

Three individuals from this town are at the Normal School, in Westfield, Mass. One has completed his course there, and is teaching in Massachusetts.

Our schools have been prosperous the past year. Quietness, good order, and neatness have prevailed. But two male teachers have been employed during the year.

IRA R. BATCHELDER, Peru.

The common schools in town, during the past year, have, with a few exceptions, made reasonable progress. One was almost an entire failure, mainly on account of a prejudice which some of the parents entertained against the teacher before she commenced her school, and the too common practice of parents finding fault with the teacher in the presence of the scholar. I can scarcely think of any thing which has a more direct tendency to destroy the respect which scholars must have for their teacher in order to make the school profitable.

I have always considered the School Register valuable, as the best method of securing valuable statistical information in relation to our schools. I believe that most teachers intend faithfully to answer all questions addressed to them, but I have become satisfied that a few fail to report all the cases in which they have inflicted corporal punishment upon their scholars.

Teachers Institutes are undoubtedly very valuable for many purposes, particularly as a means of awakening among the people a greater interest in our schools; but I think if they could be held oftener, and in more places, it would greatly add to their usefulness. I think they are most needed in the back towns where there is now the least interest in the cause of education, and where, heretofore, the distance has been such that few have felt sufficient interest to induce them to the necessary trouble and expense to attend them. I think the foregoing remarks will also apply to Normal Schools; they should be made, as far as practicable, conveniently accessible to all; and unless Normal Schools and Institutes are more accessible than heretofore, I am fearful that many teachers, with limited means, located in our mountain towns, will feel that they have just cause to complain of the inconvenience and expense to which they are subjected.

Until there is a great change in our schools, I think the complaint, that the instruction in our schools is too superficial, might with propriety be stereotyped. So long as parents will judge their teachers only by the number of pages that their children slide over, I fear that many teachers will be more desirous of obtaining the approbation of the parents than of benefiting their pupils.

W. H. FOLLETT, Readsboro.

The School Registers have been generally correctly kept by the teachers, but there have been some failures on the part of the clerks. There seems to be an increasing interest manifested in the schools in this town. As I said in my report to the town,—I think that committees should visit the schools more, and see for themselves how the schools are prospering. In fact, I think that there is no one who has so much influence in the school as the committee, and yet we but seldom find the name of a committee enrolled in the Register. The Annual Reports of the Secretary are, in my opinion, doing great service in calling the public attention to the demand of the schools. They should be thoroughly read by every parent and teacher.

Teachers boarding around seems to be going out of custom; and the teachers now board more in one place, as the law requires. The recent enactments providing for Normal Schools, and for the examination of teachers at Institutes, seem to me to be movements in the right direction.

WM. F. HAMILTON, Sandgate.

I have been Town Superintendent of schools for several years, but have suspended all remarks. I cannot give all the reasons for so doing; the thought of the condition of our schools has been so unpleasant that it has prevented me from making every effort, perhaps, that I should have made for their improvement. I think the scholars in this town, at the present time, come short of making one half of the progress that scholars made fifty or sixty years ago, when I attended school. Want of government seems to be the greatest evil here; and as our teachers, the past year, all come from other towns, I think the schools in these towns are, some of them, far from being what they should be. Here as well as in other parts of the State, few parents read the Annual Reports, or visit their schools. In my report to the town the past year, I made an effort to call attention to the importance of visiting schools, for it does appear to me that if parents knew what play houses their school houses have become, they would have different schools the coming year.

JOSEPH EAMES, Searsburg.

My acquaintance with the schools and school teachers of Shaftsbury, for the past year, has served to impress me more deeply than ever with a conviction of the pressing need there is of improvement in our common schools. We had not more than six teachers in town who were really competent to make a district school what every district ought to have. The great fault lies with parents and guardians. The Prudential Committees come in for their share of the blame. Parents have no proper ideas of what children should be taught; committees, none of what are proper qualifications for teachers to possess; teachers, none of what is an effective method of teaching,—so that between the blindness of the parents, the committees, the teachers, and the poor superintendent, the schools are not what they ought to be.

I think the law in regard to the examination of teachers, passed last fall, will do much for the improvement of the qualifications of teachers. I hope it will be sustained by the people, and faithfully executed by the Secretary of the Board of Education.

NORMAN BOTTUM, Shaftsbury.

In this town, during the past year, the schools have been, to a good degree, successful and prosperous. Teachers, it is true, have exhibited different degrees of capacity in government as well as instruction; but no one has failed, as is sometimes the case. All have acquitted themselves creditably.

The Institute that was held here in May, by the Secretary, was instrumental in awakening an increased interest in behalf of the improvement of our common schools, and also inspired those teachers who attended it with greater enthusiasm in their work. I hope that in time they will lead parents to see the necessity of having school houses that are pleasant and commodious, and of visiting the schools to help along the teachers in their great work.

There seems to be some reform needed in the examination of teachers in this town. Many of the teachers wish for private examinations, and put it off until the public examination, for the reason, as I think, that they have not confidence enough in themselves to go through with a public examination. Such persons are not generally expected to have confidence enough in themselves to act the part of good teachers. There have been only three terms taught by male teachers, in town, the past year, which I regard as a decided improvement; and I hope that only female teachers will be employed the next year, as it is being conceded on all hands that woman is the best instructor for children and youth. They are not only more apt scholars and teachers, but give a better moral tone to all who come under their influence.

M. C. SPAULDING, Burke.

I have but few suggestions to make; and among them, there is one which I wish to make emphatically. The School Register should be made returnable to the Town Clerk before the Annual March Meeting, that Superintendents can gather proper statistics for their Town reports. To remedy the difficulty, I have passed around slips of paper on which was a series of questions to be answered by each teacher, and to be returned to me at the earliest opportunity after the close of each school. It would require no more effort to return Registers properly made out by teachers and Districts Clerks in the same time. This defect in our school law can be remedied. Every superintendent feels the need of it, and they should continue to petition for a change till it is accomplished.

Evening schools have been held the past winter in this town, in the two villages alternately, in which all the schools in town have participated,—the exercises of which were made up of classes fitted up to be exemplary or model ones in Declamations, Recitations, Essays from teachers, a Paper, Music, &c., &c. Parents and friends of education have largely attended them, and the general interest in the subject of education has been increased. If these gatherings were kept up in every town in the State for the purpose of recreation only, to keep the attention of the young away from lighter amusements, they would be worth all they cost.

The most marked experiment, exhibiting progress in the subject of education in this town, the past year, is shown in the new school house built in number 7, substituting a beautiful house for the poorest, and really the only hovel there was in town. The citizens of the district have concluded this to be a better investment than the same amount in fine wools, Chester pigs, governments, or whatsoever you might bring into the comparison.

Evidently, what is most needed to-day, in a town like this, which must cover nearly three quarters of all we need to care for relative to schools in Vermont, is, the consolidation of districts, and the establishment of graded schools.

I believe the recent enactment relative to Teachers' licenses must serve to bring about a change for the better in this direction. Let the standard of qualifications be as high as we have every reason to think they will be, and the number of teachers must be so materially lessened that small and insignificant districts cannot find and pay a teacher. There will be a want on both hands,—teachers and money. Let the one great "bug bear," distance, be got over, and the thing is accomplished. The present number of school districts is really as

ridiculous as it would be for the inhabitants of the same district to spunk up and support their own Meeting House, Grist Mill, Cheese Factory, &c., all of which might be poor and insignificant, and even worthless, as the startling Grand List of one or two hundred dollars would certainly make them.

ANDREW J. HYDE, Hardwick.

We have had some excellent teachers the past year; very good in their management,—those that have been kind and attentive to the scholars under their charge; and for this they deserve public gratitude. But while I speak thus favorably of the qualities, diligence and benevolence, in teaching, I am not unconscious of the lack of a proper apprehension of the importance of real, practical, durable instruction in the general character of common school instructors.

And I would say, very respectfully, that parents are apt to manifest too much compliance in proceedings which have such an unfavorable tendency in detracting from the useful result of much time and study. To place young children under the agency of strangers to so great a degree as is required in their incipient education in the common schools, should certainly be an occasion of solicitude. The unwarranted confidence that is sometimes manifested by parents in such cases, is truly surprising. It is something which would hardly be indulged in, it seems, in any other way than by paying so little attention to the conduct and progress of district schools.

Public examinations in this place, as well as in some others, have always been considered rather insignificant; so much so, sometimes, as to be the object of ridicule even; and this influence has had a tendency to make them so, in a great degree. Two or three teachers are the most I have ever known to be present; and very few citizens, who have any real interest, ever attend. The late law providing for a more effectual examination of teachers, is, I think, a great improvement. The Registers have not been very correctly kept. District clerks being principally deficient. The list of visitors in some districts has been very large; but, in my own opinion, the majority of visitors are those who visit the teacher rather than the school. The establishment of Normal Schools will mark a new era in the progress of education in this State.

R. RISLEY, Jr., Kirby.

Much improvement may be anticipated from the working of our recent law respecting the examination of teachers at Institutes. This will serve to raise the standard of instruction, totally excluding all who are disqualified for the work. It will also have a tendency to increase the pay of teachers, thus retaining the services of teachers whose qualifications and experience have demanded greater compensation than our State has been wont to offer, by which multitudes of our best instructors have been lost to us. This, and other enactments, recently made, will increase the thoroughness of elementary instruction; thus laying the foundation for a higher standard of common school education throughout the State.

G. H. BICKFORD, Lyndon.

It is gratifying for me to remark that at no time since my connection with the schools of this town, has the interest in common school education been so great as at present. This interest is manifested in many ways. As it is an admitted principle that every effect must have a cause: the question arises, what is the cause of this renewed interest in our schools? The answer is obvious. It is to be attributed to a public examination of our schools, which was held here the close of the winter term. Thus an opportunity was given for the people to judge who the good teachers were. Not to mention the stimulus which the anticipated examination offered the teachers, they could then "compare notes,"—as some of them did to advantage. Not the least interesting fea-

ture of the exercises, in connection with the examination, was the presence of the Secretary of the Board of Education, who improved the occasion with some of his interesting, instructive, pointed and practical remarks.

For one day in the year the attention and thoughts of our good people were turned away from matter to mind, which things we rejoice to see begin to assume their relative importance. Hence, our Prudential Committees are disposed to inquire, who is the best teacher, rather than who is the cheapest. For these healthful indications we are thankful and encouraged.

Permit me, Mr. Secretary, to remark, that I think one of the great obstacles in the way of efficient schools is the pitiful compensation awarded to Superintendents. Why should the State of Vermont humiliate herself so much as to ask one class of her servants to do for her virtually a work of charity?

G. M. WILEY, Ryegate.

We have had some very good schools in town during the year. Teachers and scholars are wakefully doing their work. In some Districts, Prudential Committees have taken more pains than usual to secure the services of able, well-qualified teachers, and parents have shown an increased interest in their children's progress. I regard this as a good omen, and it is a pleasure to report such schools. And why should it not be? For the subject of Common School education is one in which we all ought to be deeply engaged and interested. It has often been said that the glory of New England is in her free school system; and when we take into consideration that nineteen-twentieths of our youth receive their entire school training here, their value can hardly be over-estimated. To this day our Common Schools suffer from many deficiencies; yet the schools lie at the basis of our social and intellectual prosperity. They have made great progress, and are still progressing, but not sufficiently. The lack of proper apparatus in school rooms is a marked obstacle to imparting practical instruction.

In my opinion, Teachers' Institutes have done more than everything else, to awaken teachers, enlighten the public mind, and draw us from the old beaten paths of ignorance and adherence to custom.

Though our worthy Secretary may never see the accomplishment of his desires, he certainly is doing a great work in conducting Institutes.

I look to the establishment of Normal Schools as another efficient means of promoting instruction. With such schools, properly conducted, and no teacher licensed without a diploma from such a school, or an equivalent, will dawn a new era in our Common Schools.

W. L. PEARL, Sheffield.

In regard to Normal Schools, I believe they cannot fail to give us better trained and more thoroughly qualified teachers; and consequently, raise the standard of our schools very much, and make teaching in our State what it should be, an honorable vocation. And when the recent enactment relating to them is fully in force, it will be, in its practical workings, a source of benefit to even our best schools, while, in our poorest schools, where cheap teachers have usually been sought, their educational interests will be much advanced by their employing those who are more thoroughly qualified, although they must reward them more liberally for their faithful services.

Elementary instruction is receiving more attention now than heretofore. There are many of our ambitious scholars who are laboring under a disadvantage through neglect of those very principles in their early school days. They seem to be building without a sufficient foundation. This part of their education receives too little attention, and, as it occurs at that period when the impressions they receive will be lasting, thoroughness and accuracy should be aimed at, particularly when they are laying the foundation for what they are to be in after life.

Most of our teachers have attended Institutes, and they succeed much better in awakening an interest in their schools than those that have not.

If our citizens, our Prudential Committees in particular, had enjoyed the same privilege, I think we should see a decided improvement in many of our schools.

A. J. GARLAND, Sutton.

Our schools the past year, with three exceptions, have been first-rate. With these exceptions, we have had a company of experienced and practical teachers, who have made teaching their business, and have taken pains to attend several Institutes; and as no teacher can attend an Institute without being benefitted by it, I feel that much of the success of our schools, at the present day, is due to the yearly Institutes held throughout the State.

I cannot speak too highly of them. I think they should be held more frequently. Several of the teachers have not been as closely tied to the text-book as previously, especially in arithmetic, though much of their energy has been lost for the want of suitable black-boards. They have used what room they had to the best advantage, by giving their classes practical examples outside the text-book. I have held evening schools the past winter, both for the purpose of introducing a new method of recitation, and to awaken an increasing interest in our schools. In our evening schools almost every class has taken its position in front of the audience, and recited their lessons in their own language without being questioned by their teacher. I have found teachers very willing to adopt this manner of recitation. And while I have listened to our recitations, both in day and evening schools, and have seen the rapid progress scholars have made in the power of thought and also in conveying their thoughts to others, I feel that I have got some compensation besides that given by the State. Our teachers, at each evening school, have favored us with essays, and our young people who have been scholars the past winter have entertained us with a paper, which has been interesting and instructive. Such has been the increasing interest in our evening schools, that our Churches were occupied, in order to convene the parents and citizens who were disposed to attend. I think we succeeded in awakening an interest in this way which could not have been equalled in any other.

CHAS. PERKINS, Walden.

The schools in this town, during the past year, have, with one or two exceptions, been quite successful. And those teachers that have attended the Institutes, have shown by their works the faith they have in them.

Some of the Districts in town have provided nice, pattern school rooms, an ornament to the town, and a great aid to the efficiency of the schools; but quite a portion of the Districts seem to think that the sons can walk in the same footsteps the father trod. The old wooden plow is as good as it ever was, consequently the improved sub-soiler is scouted. Not a single book of reference in any school in town. That "old foggy," boarding around, still has his abode with us, but I earnestly hope he may be expelled from our midst, as there is some improvement manifest.

Public sentiment here, needs educating a little in regard to the interest shown in schools while in session. The school is set running, and left to run as it will, almost. No stimulus from parents or Prudential Committees to urge on to the highest efficiency. I heartily rejoice in the enactment of last fall in regard to the examination of teachers, for I think a higher standard of qualification will be required.

CHARLES ROSS, Waterford.

Generally, men who are elected Prudential Committee are unfit. A majority of them never visit their schools. Know nothing of the teacher's management inside of the school room. Elected for Cheap Committee, they spend no time, hire cheap teachers, have cheap school houses, get teachers boarded about, do

everything cheap, even to burning rotten wood for sake of cheapness. Their name is a misnomer, and they ought to be called *Extravagant* or *Wasteful Committee*, Cheap Committee—anything but Prudential Committee.

WM. W. BAXTER, Wheelock.

The above statistics, though as complete as the materials furnished by the Registers, supplemented by personal inquiry, will admit, are far from being accurate. I have reported *two* Districts as failing to comply with the law as to keeping and filing Registers, but the fact of the case is that not more than two or three out of all the Registers are complete. The teachers are, in the main, faithful to their duties in this respect, but many, I may say, most of the district clerks treat this whole matter of making out the returns with most provoking negligence. Some questions are entirely passed over; some are altered so as to be more conveniently answered; some are evidently guessed at; some are totally misapprehended. If all statistical returns are as imperfect as those from this City, the aggregates cannot be of any great value. This is a great shame, because full and accurate returns would be of inestimable value in determining the condition of the schools and the measures needed to improve them.

M. H. BUCKHAM, Burlington.

I do not find one teacher in ten that can explain mathematics.

O. McFADDEN, Charlotte.

The law passed, placing the entire expense of schools on the Grand List, shows improvement in the right direction. Still I think further legislation necessary to guard the evil of "boarding around" from assuming a worse form, that is, compelling teachers to board around on the Grand List.

P. C. ABBEY, Essex.

One of the strongest impressions which the visitation of the schools makes on me, is the need of a higher order of instruction. We need teachers trained especially for their work, apt to teach, skillful in resources to meet the ever varying exigencies of their work, devoted to it, and ambitious to excel. I find very few who have these qualifications. Our teachers are mostly youth who resort to teaching for a temporary support, without much previous and especial preparation. Their compensation affords barely enough for their present support, with nothing to pay for books, tuition, or board, or to encourage them to seek a better fitting for their work. If the *whole amount* received by our female teachers were expended for their clothing, it would hardly furnish them equally well as the daughters of our common merchants, farmers and mechanics are furnished. In our town the whole amount paid for board of female teachers is sixty-three per cent. of the amount paid for wages. The whole amount received for a term teaching, would not more than pay the single item of board for an equal term at the Academy, to say nothing of tuition, books, clothing and incidentals. It is simply impossible for any of our teachers to pursue a course of fitting for their work, unless they are provided with resources, which teaching in our schools at present prices will never refund to them. There seems to me to be no possible plans for the improvement of our schools, that do not include higher wages to teachers. And yet there is no work done for us that is more worthy of generous compensation. Since there is no work done on farm, or in mill, or shop, or house, that affects so powerfully all the highest and holiest interests of society, the personal usefulness, happiness, virtue, and success in the world, as that which educates the mind, directs the ambition, forms the morals, and establishes the habits of our youth—nothing needs the fostering care, and generous support of every good citizen more than our schools.

C. E. FERRIN, Hinesburgh.

Upon the first four topics named, I have heretofore expressed my views. It need only be remarked now, that in attending a Teachers' Institute at Richmond, the last winter, I was more than ever impressed with the usefulness of the Institutes as now held, both for awakening and instructing teachers, and promoting interest in schools, and higher views of education among the people.

Thoroughness in elementary instruction is the great want of both teachers and pupils in nearly all our public schools. Whoever turns the attention of educators and scholars to this, does our schools a service.

The new law regarding the examination of teachers, is calculated to raise the standard of qualifications, and thus make better our schools. Good results from it may be looked for with confidence. It is favorably regarded by our most intelligent men.

AUSTIN HAZEN, Jericho.

I had hoped the recent legislation, terminating the practice of "boarding around," would once for all put a stop to what I consider an abominable practice. Some Districts in Milton, however, still refuse to remove the ancient landmark. I have no doubt that it is better not only for the teachers, but for the prosperity of our public schools that the system of boarding teachers at one place be adopted throughout the State. I think it the duty of Superintendents and teachers to endeavor to create public sentiment in favor of recent legislation.

The importance of greater thoroughness in elementary instruction in our schools seems to me plainly evident to the most superficial observer. A want of this thoroughness is our great defect. How often have I noticed it during my connection with the schools in town. We need a thorough waking up to this subject, for here is the only solid foundation of mental discipline.

A. M. PLANT, Milton.

A great want of interest in the parents is apparent.

S. H. DAVIS, Richmond.

I find that the character of the school corresponds very much with the character of the school house. Most of school houses are miserable things, low posted, with broken sash and doors, patched walls, and sunken floors,—things not fit to be called school houses. In almost every instance their interior is uninviting, and in some cases actually repulsive. I am fully of the opinion that there is nothing in which we lack more than in the matter of school houses; the condition of most of them is dangerous to health; many of the cases of sickness among our children come directly from our miserable, pig-sty school houses.

The school system as it exists in Vermont should receive the patronage and support of every well wisher of human society. It exists here upon the broad, noble and humane principle of equality to all, the poor as well as the rich—no distinction is made; all our children are entitled to all its benefits upon a common level.

That our schools under this system might and should be elevated, and that the pupils might and should receive a more thorough and profitable course of education than at present, is true; and these objects would be accomplished in most instances by improved, or new school houses, and the employment of a higher grade of teachers—those better adapted to the business of teaching.

L. P. CUSHMAN, Shelburne.

During the year there has been a manifest improvement in our Schools; that is, we have had more good teachers than almost any year previous. The same indifference upon the part of the parents and committees exists as ever—as is evident from the large number of tardinesses, and few visits from Prudential Committees, which I am obliged to report.

The great obstacles in the way of advancement in the schools of this town, are personal interest and feelings. I find a great many families in this town, who seem determined not to be satisfied with a teacher's efforts, however faithfully they may be put forth, provided the teacher does not belong to their particular circle or their religious sect; and until the masses can be enlightened or ashamed to the degree that will dispose them to lay aside such unworthy interests, we can hardly hope that our Schools will be permanently successful.

I find an evil which I think can be remedied by a change of the law. It is this: Every Committee, as you are aware, feels bound to employ as teacher, some special friend or relative of his, and then throw the entire responsibility of the school upon the Superintendent's shoulders. If the teacher happen to succeed, it is all very well; but if not, the Superintendent is guilty of a gross failure. Now, I ask that, since the Superintendent is held responsible for so much, why not give him greater power, and allow him to provide teachers himself. I would recommend that our law be so amended as to make it the duty of every town to appoint a committee of three, annually, whose duty it shall be to engage, and examine and superintend at the Schools.

S. L. BATES, Underhill.

The Schools in this town, during the past year, have been taught by very successful teachers; the most of them having had much previous experience in successful teaching. The pains taken by those who were without previous experience, were very commendable, and they showed much skill and tact for their work. The selfish feeling that has prompted many Districts to secure the services of teachers as cheap as possible, to the great detriment of the Schools, is being supplanted by a more generous feeling of interest in the support of good and thorough schools, taught by teachers of known ability and worth—prompting many districts to retain the best teachers a number of successive terms without change, paying them well, and giving them every privilege the law allows them. In all such cases, the results have been of the highest order, and quite satisfactory. We are also pleased to notice that there is a strong desire to have better and more commodious school houses, which has become of sufficient strength to prevail over all opposition shown by the "small-tax" men, when action has been taken. New houses have been, and will be erected, during the coming year; and we shall yet have good and ample accommodations in every District for Schools of a higher and more elevated character. There is a very commendable interest shown by many in favor of the Institutes, and educational meetings, which have in the main caused the present state of feeling in favor of the best schools. These meetings are attended more or less by our people, and are regarded as very important and necessary to accomplish the desired object. The Chittenden County Teachers' Association, held a very interesting meeting in town last summer, doing much good to teachers and parents. Your efforts on that occasion to awaken a living interest in support of the best teachers and most practicable reforms, were very successful and well received, leaving an impression on the minds of the people; that is showing itself in promoting important and necessary changes.

Registers are very necessary and have been very well kept. Some teachers have failed to note tardiness for the afternoon, urging as an excuse, that the check for each day should be divided by a line separating the forenoon mark from that made in the afternoon for absence, or tardiness, thus obviating the tendency to make one line for the entire day—making no true record for the afternoon. Yet with care they should be properly filled and kept as they now are.

The provisions made for Normal Schools, and Examinations at the Institutes are very important steps taken to elevate and improve teachers and Schools. It is quite too true that many of our teachers are unfit for their work; and if these enactments are properly enforced, the results will be, in my opinion, very beneficial. I trust that they will be carried into effect fully; that the Institutes may still be held under the present thorough and successful management; your Re-

ports be printed and circulated; and all means brought to bear earnestly and persistently, until through these important agencies, our Schools may be of the highest grade, supported by an interested and wide-awake people.

HENRY A. HOBART, Westford.

I know of but one opinion in this vicinity in regard to School Registers and Annual Reports—and that is, that they cannot well be dispensed with. The Annual Reports are eagerly sought for by all who feel an active interest in the welfare of the Schools, and more especially since the Secretary held an Institute here.

Some murmur at the recent legislation in regard to boarding around, but the great majority highly approve of it. Indeed, I may say, that the confidence in the ability and wisdom of the Secretary is such as to secure for his recommendations a very favorable consideration.

There can be but one opinion as to the desirableness of increasing the qualifications of teachers. How can this be best brought about? There are doubtless many means to secure this end; but prudence would seem to dictate a choice of means. Institutes impart practical knowledge; meeting the daily wants of the school room; give dexterity in the use of knowledge previously acquired; unfold briefly different methods of instruction; multiply resources to those who are without experience; create a measure of ambition in teachers; and kindle and diffuse an enthusiasm in behalf of the schools in community. In their peculiar sphere they seem to have no substitutes, hence, may be considered indispensable. But after all, the teacher needs some other and further aid; and that is the drill and discipline of the Normal School. More costly than Institutes, and reaching a smaller number of teachers, still they develop in the teacher what cannot be so well obtained elsewhere, the capacity to impart *exact* and *thorough* instruction. Superficial teaching is the great evil in our schools, and will continue to be, until teachers are thoroughly conversant with the best methods of teaching. In the development of this ripe capacity, it is believed the Normal School will prove an invaluable agency. The enactment for the examination of the teachers at the Institutes is, probably, the surest means of shutting out incompetency—perhaps, the only means. It will, of course, enhance teachers' wages for a time, and so may cause some complaint on the part of niggardly tax-payers; but in the end, the supply will equal the demand, and wages will be no more remunerative than they ought to be. It will tend to make teaching a vocation to be followed, as the lawyer, the doctor, and the clergyman now pursue their respective callings, though, possibly, not to the same extent. And this is, undoubtedly, a desideratum. GEO. W. HARTSHORNE, Canaan.

Registers, Institutes, and Annual Reports cannot be dispensed with without serious detriment to our Schools. Boarding is slowly—very slowly, passing away; but if the freemen of Vermont want it abolished at once, they must say so in more definite language than they have yet used. Twelve out of twenty-four teachers have been boarded around in Concord during the past year. Recent legislation does not prevent a District doing so when they see fit.

The recent law providing for Normal Schools is a step forward, inasmuch as they publicly acknowledge the importance of greater thoroughness in elementary instruction, and prepare a way whereby our teachers may be better prepared to do their work. I believe it to be the duty of every person officially connected with our schools, to use his influence to gradually raise the standard of the teachers' qualifications, until it meet the necessities of the age. I like the plan of passing the examinations into the hands of the State Board, but I do not approve of the examination being held at the very moment of the Institute, for the teachers lose a valuable portion of the instruction which they might otherwise be able to obtain. Again, I seriously doubt the propriety of the examinations being wholly made by requiring applicants to answer a certain per cent. of

printed questions, for, in the midst of such Institutes many of our most faithful and efficient teachers might fail to answer the required number; and still again, an entirely unworthy applicant might accidentally answer a sufficient number to entitle him or her to a certificate for five years. In short, I believe the only reliable method of examination is to form a class and to hold them to a rigid oral examination, granting license to such only as give evidence by their personal appearance and general bearing, that they are fitted by nature, as well as by education, to discharge the responsible duties that devolve upon the teacher.

H. C. WOODWARD, Concord.

In regard to the examinations of teachers at the Institutes, perhaps I am not prepared to express a fair opinion, as I was unable to attend the last Institute held in this County. But I confess, I have some doubts as to the benefits likely to accrue from it. Will not the examinations be in other more than in elementary departments?

In regard to the recent enactments for Normal Schools, I cannot say that I approve of them. Not that I object to Normal Schools. I think them of great importance to teachers and the State at large. But the State should have made tuition in them free to all such as design to teach in the State, as in Massachusetts.

In regard to "boarding around," I consider the law good, inasmuch as it makes property the basis of taxation; but I am not sure it prevents boarding around. In some places there is not so much of it, in others more.

A word relative to Superintendents' compensation. I have received from the Auditor of Accounts a circular upon the subject; and all I have to say is, I hope he will be as strict with all claimants as with Superintendents.

A. R. BOYCE, Granby.

I believe our Teachers' Institutes are a great benefit to our schools, for they awaken an interest in the community for the welfare of our schools, and the cause of Education. The law prohibiting boarding on the scholar is received with more favor the longer it is tried, and the old custom of boarding around is fast becoming obsolete.

The Annual Reports should be attentively read by all friends of Education. I hope they will never be discontinued. The new law giving teachers a chance to procure certificates of the Board, entitling them to a right to teach anywhere in the State for the space of five or fifteen years, I think an excellent one, for it will be quite an object for any one intending to teach in the Common Schools of this State to procure such a certificate, and they will endeavor to fit themselves for the rigid examination that they will then doubtless have to pass.

A. T. HOLBROOK, Lemington.

A course of instruction in the elementary branches is the design of the Common School, and the greater thoroughness the greater benefits will accrue therefrom. We need a course of instruction which will fit teachers especially for their calling of common-school teaching; and the recent enactments are what we want in this respect, and will do much toward making common-school teaching a profession. An examination of Teachers at the Institutes also, will tend to an improvement in the qualifications of teachers, and through them improve the Schools at large.

JOHN R. LEE, Victory.

The School Districts are small. The compensation paid to teachers is too low to induce first-class teachers to remain with us. The school-houses are poor. The citizens are indifferent. And we are going from bad to worse. Petty local

prejudice prevents the establishment of a Graded School in the village. We seem greatly in danger, if left to ourselves, of returning to heathenism. Again I implore the State to assume more authority, and not leave such mighty interests to be jeopardized by the caprice of local feeling.

G. F. WRIGHT, Bakersfield.

In the answers to the foregoing questions, you will perceive that there is still a lack of public spirit in educational matters here. Why there is such a reluctance, on the part of parents and guardians and committees in giving to teachers and scholars that which they seek to merit—their patronage and support in the school-room—and in supplying them with suitable books of reference, and the necessary conveniences for their edification, is mysteriously hidden.

R. F. BINGHAM, Fletcher.

Oh, for the time when men will think half as much of the education of the immortal minds of their children as they do of breeding nice cattle, or of gathering together or of saving a little more of the gold that *perishes*.

Such scrimping and pinching and economizing as there must be in every thing which concerns education; while, to gratify pride and vanity, appetite and passion, twice or thrice, or even twenty times the amount, will go freely. Such strange creatures are we. Yet so it is, and so it will be while man is the poor, fallen being that he is. And patience—labor, labor—patience still and always must be the watch-words in every good cause.

There has been rather an unusual amount of trouble in our schools this year—in one district three different teachers in one term; another two; and others, more or less of difficulty. Our Graded School has prospered during the year, and been a great and manifest benefit in many ways, saving to the community in the home advantages it has offered—even *thousands* of dollars. And yet, through the influence of a few men of wealth, with little or no present interest in children to send, the tax has been voted down, so as to greatly hamper the Committee for the coming year, even if it does not necessitate the entire suspension of the Higher Grade. *Thought* and *money*—how much our Schools need these two things expended on them; and what blessings might we reap as a State by a truly liberal policy in this respect. But for these things we wait. Fly swifter round ye wheels of time.

G. B. TOLMAN, Sheldon.

I am very much in favor of the examination of teachers at the Institute. I think it will compel our teachers to make more thorough preparation for their work; and make them to feel more the importance of their calling. Those who now make application for schools, who are hardly capable of teaching A, B, C, will not trouble the Institute. This class of aspirants will conclude to wait till their beards be grown, or till they lay aside their short clothes. This arrangement will also compel teachers to attend the Institute at least once, and having learned the value of the instruction obtained there, will be much more likely to avail themselves of future opportunities. That they should be influenced to attend the Institutes is, to my mind, of very great importance. No place affords such rare opportunities to gain the instruction which they need. The great benefit resulting to the cause of education generally, from holding Institutes in different parts of the State, cannot be called in question with any show of reason. The sterling principles presented, moral and educational, with their practical bearings, cannot be powerless. They break up the terrible lethargy which too generally prevails on the subject of Education, and stir the hearts of parents and philanthropists in the right direction. The influence of the Institute on this community was most happy. Such, I think, it cannot otherwise be on any community.

C. B. CADY, Alburgh.

The most deplorable deficiency exists in this town with regard to globes, outline maps, dictionaries, clocks, and thermometers. In my opinion these should be obtained by some means and placed in every school house in our noble State. I regard them as necessary to the promotion of the best interests of our Schools. I would suggest that a fine be imposed by the State upon every delinquent District in this respect. I fear that the evil can be remedied in no other way.

M. J. HYDE, Isle La Mott.

The Schools of this town have been highly successful the past year. A better class of teachers, with better wages, accounts for the success. School meetings have been well attended, and the schools are prospering.

J. M. HAWRICAN, North Hero.

The Schools in this town during the past year have, as a whole, been very good. In two or three Districts there has been some dissatisfaction expressed at the lack of good discipline exhibited. However, most of the teachers have evinced a good degree of interest and energy in their business. During the year one District has erected, at an expense of \$2,000, a commodious and beautiful School House, and, it is thought, will adopt the Graded System.

The plan of consolidating the small Districts seems to meet with increasing favor, as the evils growing out of the existence of numerous and small Districts are seen more clearly.

With regard to the advantages arising from the Teachers' Institutes, and the Annual Reports of the Secretary, no one can doubt, who gives the subject a careful and unprejudiced consideration. The failure of teachers is owing, not so much to a lack of competent knowledge of the subjects taught, as of ability to impart instruction and awaken interest in scholars. The object of the Institute is to assist teachers in this respect. The Institute serves to impress the teacher with a sense of the importance of his work, and the responsibility that rests upon him, and stimulates him to fresh endeavor, and makes him anxious, not only for his own improvement, but for that of his profession.

The sentiment seems to be rapidly growing, all over the State, that the time has come when we must demand higher qualifications of teachers, and that we must have those who have been trained by a Normal course of instruction for their work. The experiment of introducing the Normal School into the State has been started. Whether it will succeed in the way devised by the Legislature, remains to be seen. Let us hope for the best. It is certainly the beginning of better things.

OSCAR ATWOOD, Cambridge.

The worst fault of our Schools I have had to contend with, has been the lack of promptness in attendance. I should perhaps rather say, it was the most offensive manifestation of a general looseness of discipline. This, I apprehend to be fully more the fault of the teacher than any one else. If the teacher is indifferent and unpunctual, that indifference and unpunctuality is sure to be multiplied among the scholars. The number of tardinesses reported, though astonishingly large, is not so great as it really is, for it does not show those times when teachers and scholars were alike tardy, or when the indulgent teacher, though conveniently careful to be personally present, waits till the scholars get there, before commencing school. No worse thing could scarcely be done by the teacher. In School, above every thing else, habits of punctuality should be cultivated. The School should begin at the proper time and exactly at the time, and the scholars taught to regulate their habits by the correct standard, rather than the standard be lowered to suit their indolence or caprice.

I have endeavored to impress upon the schools the importance of punctuality, by explaining the effect of absence from one exercise of the school as not only a loss of so much benefit as would be represented by the proportionate amount of time, but in breaking the connection of the study it seriously impairs the

whole subsequent course, and showing that the loss of a lesson is like the loss of a link of a chain, and destroys the sequence of all that follows. Another reason for punctuality is that this is the best possible discipline that can be given in school, and if the scholar should learn nothing else than prompt, punctual habits, their effect alone on his subsequent success in business would be well worth the time spent in school.

It seems to me that we have too great a number of books in the same series. For example, I am not able to see any benefit from inserting Intermediate Readers between the numbers of the series of Town's Readers, as they were when I was a practical teacher. It seems to me that this is more a desire of publishers to multiply their profits, than a reference to any real want. I know it may be claimed that a variety of reading is better. I have never, however, seen a District School scholar who could read even the First Reader too well, or even satisfactorily.

Of your Teachers' Institutes, I need not say, that they are of great benefit, and the only fault is there is not more of them. I think they are better appreciated and are more useful from year to year, as they continue. I have endeavored to labor in the same field, by holding two Institutes just preceding the public examination of teachers, of two days each. In them I had a class of about twenty teachers, and sought to impress on them severally the same or similar instructions to those you give to larger audiences. I trust they have done good. They cost me a good deal of the hardest labor. I have charged in my account for these, four dollars, which I have no expectation of receiving. If they do even a small portion of the good I hope they have, I shall feel well repaid, even though I do not get the four dollars.

If we can have some Normal Schools, with some energetic, good men at their head, they will do great good. To accomplish much, however, it seems to me they require more endowment than can be had from tuitions. We need in them the best talent. Now that cannot be had without compensation. When men of the same measure of ability in other professions can command from three to five thousand dollars a year in Vermont, and more elsewhere, it is idle to hope they can be permanently secured by tuitions giving a precarious, starvation pay of \$500 to \$1,000 a year. If we could have such schools, with corps of teachers who could earn and receive \$2,000 a year, I should expect more than there is now much reason to hope for. It is doubtless idle to expect our Legislature can be brought to see it in this light, but I trust that by judicious exertion they may be brought to do something in that direction. I am very glad of the provision for examinations of teachers at the Institutes, and for State Certificates for 5 and 15 years. I have doubts about the provision that after 5 years none others shall be allowed to teach. Would it not be better to retain town examinations? We have not now, and probably never shall have enough teachers for our schools who can pass a thorough examination. If town examinations are done away with you will be forced to lower the standard for a State Certificate. Now, we cannot make too much distinction between a good teacher and a poor one. It seems to me, therefore, that it would be better to keep the standard for State Certificates where it ought to be, and allow the towns to take on a lower grade such as they are obliged to have. The effect of this will be to create an ambition among teachers to have first-class certificates, and Districts will have pride in having only such teachers. This will tend to give good teachers better pay. Poor teachers are already over-paid.

The legislation with regard to "boarding around" is made nugatory in some Districts by boarding the teacher around on the Grand List, which has all the evils and lacks the benefits of the old system.

Allow me to make a suggestion as to the compensation of Town Superintendents. No man can do good in that capacity, unless he has an earnest interest in the success of efforts to advance the cause of education. If he has such interest, he will work on small pay. If we make it a paying office, it will

become one of the prizes for that lowest kind of electioneering which strives after town offices. Men fit for the place would not descend to such things, and could not compete with their rivals if they did. It is better that we have, as we now do, a class of good men with shamefully inadequate compensation, than give good pay, and have a class of incompetent Superintendents.

REUBEN C. BENTON, Hydepark.

For the Secretary to ask the Superintendent to approve measures legalizing the prospective extinction of an office, deemed by him as a moral and educational agency, is much as if a Sheriff should importune an innocent man, about to be hung, to express publicly, his approval of the sentence by which he dies. Had the Secretary asked the Superintendent, ere procuring the passage of the law designing the extinction of the Superintendency, for his views of such a measure—had he consulted the Superintendent as to an adequate substitute; had he asked for some public expression, through the press or otherwise, as to whether all power of licensure should pass from the hands of the people to his hands, duty to the schools, as well as respect for the Secretary, would require that the Superintendent offer his most mature counsels. But the Secretary is too discerning and too just to expect or to exact opinions on foregone conclusions.

J. DOUGHERTY, Johnson.

We have had some good schools, but very few of the first order. I have been much tried with a want of thoroughness in the instructions of teachers. This arises from a want of preparation for their work. Being superficial in their own knowledge of the studies they are teaching, their instructions are necessarily of the same character. There is very little thorough drill in reading. Simply because very few of the teachers are really good readers. I rejoice in the prospect of having teachers who are better qualified through the advantages to be gained at our Normal Schools. If they prove successful as in other States, a few years will witness a marked improvement in our schools.

LYMAN BARTLETT, Morristown.

Teachers' Institutes are producing practical and beneficial results. After attending an Institute two days, teachers return to their schools with renewed interest; they feel more ambition to have their school prosperous, and they manifest a great desire to have their scholars understand the new systems of instruction discovered at the Institutes.

The legislation in reference to boarding around is worthy of much praise. No one can appreciate its value more than the tired and care-worn teacher.

V. P. MACUTCHAN, Stowe.

The great trouble in our town is the lack of interest on the part of parents and guardians. Only two of the Prudential Committee have taken the pains to visit the schools of the town during the year. I think were a Teachers' Institute to be held in this town, it would be the means of bringing about much good.

S. R. MILLER, Waterville.

Our schools have improved since last year. But there is still a deficiency in thorough teaching. Far too many have no clear conception of the importance of making the pupil understand the elements. If a scholar can give the correct answer to questions in Mental Arithmetic, without understanding fully the process, it is a good lesson. If, in Geography, the teacher asks the questions at the bottom of the page, and the scholars answer them, why, that is enough, the

lesson is good. A few teachers are found who fully appreciate the decided benefit of thorough drilling. Three weeks of such thorough teaching is really worth more than months of indifferent, careless, half-way instruction. I think the remedy of the evil will be found in the Normal Schools. The Institute held in town was a decided benefit.

HORACE HERRICK, Wolcott.

At our Annual Town Meetings, our time and attention are devoted mainly to the consideration of material interests,—to those necessary concerns which involve the expenditure of large sums of money. Important and necessary as these are, they are not to be compared with the educational interests of the people. The value of a man as a citizen does not depend altogether upon his pecuniary wealth, but upon what he is in heart and mind. Cultivated intellect and honesty of purpose, are needed to develop the resources of our country, and to advance permanently its prosperity. It is a matter of no minor importance what the character of our citizens shall be,—upon whom will devolve the management of our increasing public affairs. That these persons may be equal to their task, they must be prepared for it, and the place for this preparation is in our Common Schools. The best way, then, to promote our material interests, is to provide for the wants of our Common Schools.

The saying that "as is the teacher, so will be the school," has passed into a proverb. If, then, we would have the work of improvement advanced in regard to our schools, means should be used to increase the efficiency and usefulness of our teachers. It is not enough for a teacher that he or she is able to pass a fair examination, exhibiting a passable knowledge of the branches usually taught in the schools. The standard of the qualification of teachers should be an elevated one. The evil and inconvenience of low wages may be abated somewhat, if teachers themselves will take the matter in hand and strive to be better qualified. Our teachers, generally, need to be more fully informed in regard to educational matters in our own State, and in other States. Also, as far as practicable, teachers in all the towns of Vermont should be acquainted with our school laws, and their requirements, and what is being done in accordance with our School System throughout the State.

An excellent mode is provided to place the Annual Reports of the Secretary of the Board of Education before the inhabitants of all our School Districts. A copy of each Annual Report is furnished the Clerk of each School District for safe keeping, and the use of the inhabitants. Teachers who desire to maintain an honorable standing with their fellow teachers, should not fail to read the Reports. They abound with useful, practical suggestions, by the Secretary and other friends of education. The enactments providing for Normal Schools, and for the examination of teachers at Institutes, cannot fail to meet the cordial approval of those interested in a particular preparation of teachers for their important work. I regard this as a move in the right direction; a long-standing need is now met by these enactments. Some teachers may succeed without availing themselves of this aid, and some persons in other professions who have not had the benefit of similar advantages, succeed tolerably well; but all these would have been more useful and successful, with a special preparation had at an institution whose specific design is to fit and prepare students for the profession which they have chosen.

The last question in the schedule of questions, found also in the Registers, is by no means of the least importance: What is the number of Classes in the School? This question reminds us of a serious evil in our Schools—a multiplicity of classes. Where there are found such a number of classes as is found in many schools, but very little of what is done can be well done. With such a number of recitations each day, it is impossible to have systematic and thorough instruction. In society, and in all organizations, we must forego individual inclinations and rights, for the general good. This is for our interest, and so in the school; every scholar cannot be so accommodated, at least in the present

state of these matters, as to choose each particular study he may desire. There should be a consultation between scholars, or otherwise leave it to the teacher to arrange the classes. The point to be sought is to reduce the number of classes to a reasonable, good-working number. Then the work of instruction will proceed efficiently and successfully.

JOSHUA BRITTON, Bradford.

With a few exceptions, the several schools have made good progress, and a few of the teachers have been truly excellent ones. The law intended to put an end to boarding around is pretty generally evaded. The tax is raised on the Grand List, but so much of it as is required to pay the board is allowed to be paid by boarding it out.

WM. H. NICHOLS, Braintree.

The schools of this town, for the past year, have generally been successful, especially those of the winter. The teachers, in nearly every instance, have proved themselves equal to the work, and have been more than usually well qualified to instruct, manage and govern their schools. The character of the instruction given has been of a higher order than of any previous year within my knowledge, the teachers being more practical and thorough, and attending more to fundamental principles. The condition the schools in regard to regular and punctual attendance, has been much improved within the past few years; and this has been brought about mainly by the use of the Registers, presenting as they do, the true condition of each school in the particulars, and by having this presented to the eye, evils could be seen and remedied.

To encourage the scholars in the summer schools to better punctuality, a promise was made that the names of as many as would not get a tardy mark through the term, should be inserted in the school report to the town. More than one-third of the scholars were not tardy in one single instance.

As another means of improving the condition of the schools in this town, Teachers' Meetings have been held in the winter terms for some years past, every week, generally alternating at two central points. The methods of conducting them has varied somewhat with each term—changing as improvements were suggested. Discussions upon various topics connected with the business of the school room formed the principal exercises of these meetings until the past winter, when a different plan was suggested, which was, that two or three recitations should be conducted by some one of the teachers previously selected. At each meeting subjects or topics in the different studies were selected for the next meeting and teachers appointed to conduct the exercises; all the teachers, except the one conducting the recitation, with such others as would join them, forming the class. Each recitation was conducted according to the plan of the person appointed for that purpose, and the answers given by the members of the class, and the elucidation of principles and explanation of rules, were subject to the criticism of the whole class,—the class also having the privilege of criticizing the method of conducting the recitation. Different methods of conducting recitations and explanations of principles, served to awaken a good interest in the minds of the teachers, and I am confident much good to the schools resulted therefrom.

Public examinations were held in a majority of the Districts, at the close of the winter Schools. Parents were present, and in some instances the attendance was very good. I believe more could be accomplished by a well-conducted examination at the close of the Schools.

S. P. WILCOX, Brookfield.

The Schools in Corinth have, during the past year, been disturbed with no turbulent scholars, neither has there been exhibited on the part of parents, a disposition to find fault with the teachers. The teachers employed have generally been competent and industrious, and given satisfaction. There is in this

town an increasing interest in the cause of education among parents and scholars. The teachers have been more thorough in elementary instruction the past year than ever before, I think.

The provision for the examination of teachers at Institutes, is not favorably considered by teachers, and is, perhaps, somewhat arbitrary or premature.

There are in town 24 organized School Districts, which, you will observe, gives a very small average attendance to each District. What is true of Corinth is, to a certain extent, true of other towns, though I think Corinth is an extreme case. An effort is being made by the friends of Education in town to re-district so as to be able to have good houses and apparatus, well qualified teachers, and be able to pay such wages as will induce teachers to qualify.

The subject of board has been extensively and warmly agitated in our School Meetings this spring as well as last. The inclination to board around on the Grand List is still exhibited in some districts, though I think it is getting rather unpopular. Would not the enactment of an explanatory clause affixed to the provision for board of teachers, be beneficial?

F. P. EATON, Corinth.

I think that most of the recent enactments in relation to Schools are wise, and will result in much good to them. The Normal Schools will be of much benefit if teachers can be induced to attend them. There certainly can be no objection to the examination of teachers at the Institutes. But it is very doubtful whether this should ever be made the only means whereby teachers can get license to teach. Many of our country schools are so small that they can hardly be expected to employ professional teachers; and it seems to me unreasonable to oblige the teachers who must be employed in these schools, to attend Institutes, what over the distance and circumstances may be. It will have a tendency to raise the price of teaching higher than small districts will be willing to pay.

I think that in this town there is a growing interest in the welfare of our Common Schools, and more of a willingness to comply with the requirements of the law; but great care should be taken not to legislate too far in advance of the public sentiment.

JOHN STRATTON, Fairlee.

I have tried to impress on the minds of teachers the importance of a correct keeping of the Registers, in every particular. I have certainly no objections to the examination of teachers at Institutes. I think a teacher who has been approved year after year, and taught with marked success, ought be eligible to teach in any town in the State, without being obliged to go to the public examination, or to pay the Superintendent 50 cents for examination. And if at the Institute, the examination could be made to give this privilege to such teachers, I think it would be well to let such certificate last a term of years; not too long, so as to keep them on the wheel of improvement, lest they become indolent.

Z. S. HAYNES, Newbury.

The standard of our Schools is very low, and the benefit derived from them very small compared with what it might be, if suitable efforts were made to improve them.

One of the obvious reasons for this state of things, is the employment of incompetent teachers. We have had in this town, only a very few good teachers during the past year, and the labors of these few have not been appreciated. A good School is of so rare occurrence, and so few parents ever see the inside of a school house in term time, that the difference between a good school and a poor one is far from being understood by a large share of the people. If twenty good teachers were to be employed in this town during the year to come, they would meet with opposing influences outside of the school room, which would greatly hinder and cripple them in their efforts. But there is no prospect of obtaining

such teachers at present. Most of our teachers have no suitable preparation for their work. Many of them have had no other education than that obtained in some small, backward, poorly-taught Common School. They know nothing of thoroughness, nothing of accurate definitions, nothing of clear explanations. We have black-boards in our school houses, but such teachers do not know how to use them. We have bright, clear-headed scholars, but such teachers do not know how to instruct them. To keep order, to ask the questions in the books, and put out the words, to stand by while the class reads, and occasionally to help a scholar work out an example which he ought to work out himself, appears to be regarded as the ultimatum of a teacher's duties. It is a question which every friend of education should ask, and endeavor to answer: What must be done in order that our Common Schools may be made what they are designed to be? We need Normal Schools, well sustained and patronized, and we must have them, or we shall fall far behind the age, and deprive our children of those advantages which the children of other States enjoy. A few such Institutions as that in Westfield, Mass., sending out well-trained teachers to every town in the State, would put new life into our Schools and tend to open the eyes of the people. The State should make a generous appropriation for this object, as it seems to me. It would be a move in the right direction, and would give a new impulse to the cause.

The Teacher's Institutes are doing a good work. They awaken new lines of thought, and show that there is a more excellent way of teaching than the old one. Their influence for good must be felt, especially in the towns where they are held. If the time could be lengthened from two days to four, the usefulness of the Institutes would be greatly increased. I should decidedly approve of the proposal to examine teachers at the meetings of the Institutes. It would enable those who examine to have a fixed and uniform standard of scholarship for all teachers, and it would not be as easy as it now is often, for Prudential Committees to employ incompetent teachers because they are cheap.

One greater need seems to be an enlightened public sentiment practically in favor of good schools, and of using all the means necessary to secure good schools. That the people generally may be led to take the interest in the subject which its importance demands, a great responsibility rests upon the Town Superintendents. If they are not pioneers in the work of reform, who can we expect will be? Their reward must be the satisfaction of working faithfully in a good cause; for they get no other remuneration which is at all adequate.

A. CHANDLER, Stratford.

A few of our schools, the past year, have been excellent. More have done passably well, and a few were scarcely better than none. If in any way we can raise the standard of qualification of teachers, we take an important step in advance. As it is, the qualifications are better than the compensation. I think, however, if our candidates for teaching will go to the Institutes for a certificate, they gain two important objects: the benefits of the Institutes, and a certificate for a term of years. I am glad the new law has been enacted. It will work well, if it is not in advance of the age. If it prove to have this defect, we must try to bring the age up to it. The idea suggesting the establishment of Normal Schools is a good one, but just how these schools will prove, will depend upon their practical management. If they become model schools, their benefits must be incalculable. We will hope for the best. In my judgment the great defect in the working of our Thetford schools is the lack of thoroughness in elementary instruction. I am pained to see in the schools such a neglect of penmanship, spelling and reading. And in arithmetic, only a small portion of the teachers are careful to insist upon a careful and complete knowledge of first principles; while in geography and grammar, only a few of the pupils are com-

pelled to master the elements, before they press forward into the higher departments of study. Thus they become bewildered and discouraged.

LEONARD TENNEY, Thetford.

The schools of this town have had various degrees of success during the year. Some have been good, some bad, and some indifferent. Without referring to the excellences, I may call attention to some things which militate against the success of the schools in this town:

1. I would notice a lack of qualifications on the part of teachers. The supply is up to the demand, however, for several Districts refuse teachers simply on the ground that their services are worth five dollars per week. A teacher asking one dollar and a half, can get employment, while some of our best and most experienced teachers have left off teaching.

2. Methods of teaching, far behind the times, are common. For instance, students will be kept studying grammar two or three terms before they are thought competent to begin to parse. Other studies are treated in as unfair a manner. A marked improvement could be seen in those teachers who attended the Institute at Chelsea, but there is room for more improvement.

3. Want of apparatus, has the effect to give force to the last cause of failure. Not a Dictionary, Globe, Clock, Thermometer, Outline Maps, or Arithmetical Block is to be found in town.

4. Want of attractiveness and comfort in the school houses are noticeable. Play grounds are unknown in this town. Most of the school houses are unfit for use, and some are so poor as to endanger health, particularly in cold weather. We have a few school houses, however, that are as good as the nature of the case requires.

5. A lack of government and discipline is apparent. Some teachers have failed entirely from this cause, and have been obliged to leave the r schools. Most teachers have ignored corporal punishment, and ill disposed persons have taken advantage of that fact, especially where the teacher was a woman. I do not believe in "drubbing," yet cases have arisen in which a little discipline of that sort would have been beneficial, in my judgment.

6. An undue interference on the part of parents has had a bad effect in several schools, and in one case the school entirely broken up. Such parents are too narrow-minded to examine the foundation of their antipathies, or to seek a personal interview with the teacher.

These are some of the defects of the schools in this town; but they have not been without many merits. Some of the schools have been especially good in spite of all obstacles. All hope for the success of the Normal School at Randolph, to give us a better grade of teachers. S. E. ROOT, Tunbridge.

In the eleven organized Districts in town, there have been, during the year, nineteen terms of school, which I have classed as fourteen good and five middling, none being superior, and none very bad. The schools in three Districts have considerably improved the past year. One term of instruction by a superior teacher has often an improving and stimulating influence for a long time. Three winter terms were taught by male teachers, at one dollar and eighty-three cents per week more than the average winter wages of female teachers. But I think those who taught in the summer would have kept equally as good schools. One term of sixteen weeks and thirteen scholars, reports no tardiness; one term of six weeks and eight scholars, report two tardinesses.

There is a great deficiency in *drilling* in our schools. It is astonishing how little else than a mere "he ring of lessons," is the instruction even of many of our good teachers. I was greatly surprised, last summer, by the very clear and distinct articulation of a lad of 12 years; he was not a native of our schools, but a Massachusetts boy.

The system of Graded Schools is admirably adapted to all our Vermont towns. The population of this town is very scattered; yet three contiguous Districts on the stage road could be most profitably united to sustain a higher department.

Perhaps no better plan could be devised for raising the qualifications of our teachers, than the giving of certificates by Institutes and Normal Schools. A higher standard of qualification would thus be presented, and unqualified teachers could not expect to be licensed. While Town Superintendents grant certificates, it is almost impossible to refrain always from giving them, where they are not really deserved. Therefore it is best that, after a suitable time, the authority to give certificates should be limited to our Institutes and Normal Schools.

CHARLES DUREN, Vershire.

A School Register I consider as indispensable as a Black-board. It is a valuable assistant in the general order and department of a school, increases the attendance, diminishes unnecessary tardiness, and has been a strong incentive to the well doing of the teacher, not only by abolishing many of the brutal modes of punishment formerly resorted to, but also creating an energy and thoroughness not otherwise attained.

I can do but little more than reiterate what I have before said in regard to Teachers' Institutes. I regard teaching as a high and noble calling, and no teacher can be too well qualified to meet the requirements of our schools. By mutual intercourse, an exchange of ideas, suggestions and truths can be acquired in no better way than by such intercourse with experienced teachers at our Annual Institutes. And many of our teachers and some of our citizens have expressed a desire to have our next one held in this town, so that they may better avail themselves of its benefits.

Our Annual Institutes are of some benefit, but might be rendered more useful if they could be furnished the people more generally.

Too little attention to early elementary training. Children generally learn to read and spell before they are 12 years old. I have rarely known a good reader and speller who was not so at that age. Few teachers bring themselves to the capacity of little scholars, and sufficiently enlist their interest. Little children should be taken by the hand, and lead over the ground again and again, until every step is perfectly familiar to them. Most teachers by attempting to teach little children too many things at once, and urging them along too fast, fail of teaching them anything properly. They should remember that it is the *mind* of the child which is to be taught, and which must be made to perceive, and that the child can advance no farther or faster than he can be made to perceive, however slowly that may be.

I wish that something might be said or done to influence teachers to have a public examination of their schools at the close of the term, so that parents could see and judge for themselves of the advancement of their schools. New Hampshire and Massachusetts have adopted this plan, and good results have followed. And must we be behind sister States in anything promotive of the well-being of our Common Schools—I should dislike to say it, in anything so easy to be accomplished, and of such importance as I consider this to be.

H. S. DAVENPORT, Williamstown.

Notwithstanding the decided improvement in the schools in this town, there is not as yet, that appreciation of the difference between a first-class school and indifferent one, that is to be desired. The fact that there is not a book of references of any kind, nor an outline map, globe, or thermometer, and only one clock in town, and but one play ground wholly enclosed, shows very clearly that

parents do not understand the wants of their children. For example, it is scarcely possible to give a child a clear idea of the form and motion of the earth, and the relative situation of places on its surface, to say nothing of the alternations of day and night, the changes of seasons, &c., without a globe. How small the expense compared with the benefits to the successive classes in a District through a series of years!

In many Districts the miserable policy yet prevails of hiring cheap teachers. When will the people learn that it should be their first care to secure the very best in the market? When that time comes the State Normal Schools will be regarded as an indispensable instrumentality in fitting teachers for their responsible work. Then the inducements to teachers for obtaining the most thorough practical training possible, will be vastly augmented in comparison with what they now are. Then schools will be often visited by parents and guardians, and school houses be thoroughly furnished with all that can minister to the comfort and progress of the pupils.

KIMBALL HADLEY, Albany.

The efforts that are being made to make teaching more thorough in our schools should be seconded by every one. A thorough knowledge of the elements of a science is worth more to a man than an imperfect understanding of all the branches pursued in school.

A few of the principles of things indixed in the memory, will form a substantial basis upon which to build up something useful and permanent. Then too, a thoroughness in school teaches another lesson: it makes the student thorough in his labors as well as in his studies; makes him feel that what is worth doing at all, is worth doing well.

The tendency to bring the higher branches into the Common School is an evil. We have many scholars that pursue algebra, the languages, music and other things that cannot compose, according to the rules of grammar and the teachings of the spelling book, the simplest piece of prose. Nor is this true alone of those who attend school now. More than three-quarters of the posted notices, warnings for meetings, &c., to say nothing of letters and other manuscripts, written by business men, are deficient in the rules of orthography and composition, besides being badly written. This tendency to the higher branches of study, to the neglect of the elementary, should be opposed by everybody who has school interests at heart.

We look to the Normal Schools as another advancement in our school interests. If our teachers can have a uniform system of instruction, and, as we hope, a good one, they alone can do much for the *chairs*, so to speak almost, that now characterize the teaching in the State. In our examination of schools we find as many ways of teaching as teachers, and, unfortunately, everybody's style is not a good style. But to make the Normal Schools efficient and valuable to the public, the public has a part to do in the work. Teachers cannot fit for their vocation without expense and labor, no more than the artisan can learn his trade without cost; and once fitted, they must be paid as they will have made themselves worthy of their hire. Two dollars a week will not pay the lady for teaching, who has spent years and expended hundreds of dollars in learning how to teach. Let us come up and pay good teachers what they earn, and make the money used of good avail. Our Legislature in its wisdom and benevolence seems to quite School Superintendents. I know no reason why a faithful Superintendent cannot earn more than one dollar a day. If he is fit to be in the office at all, he can earn more than that, and ought to be paid. For my own part I have tried to do the work faithfully, if it has been of little avail, and have contributed in time and labor two dollars for every dollar received, and have given up an office that is considered by the law-making men of the State worth only one dollar a day.

GEO. H. MAKE, Barre.

Progress in regard to our Common Schools seems to be slow yet sure. I believe Committees take more pains than formerly to inquire out the *best*, rather than the *cheapest* teachers. In this town we have had generally, experienced and able teachers during the past year; and the people seem to be learning their comparative value. But I am looking for still greater improvement when the act of last fall shall have come into full effect, making it necessary for teachers to procure their certificates from a Committee of the Board of Education. For, as wise and highly compensated as we Superintendents are, we are human after all, and one dollar per day is hardly compensation enough to pay one for refusing certificates to three or four of his friends and neighbors, where he would do so were they strangers, or he could divide the responsibility of his unfavorable decision.

O. H. AUSTIN, Brownington.

Our schools are prospering, as usual. The special need for their greater improvement and prosperity, is a special training of teachers for their special work. I think the Normal Schools and the examinations at the Institutes will do a good work for the schools in furnishing better qualified teachers.

A. R. GRAY, Coventry.

The schools in Craftsbury during the past year have been, as a whole, remarkably good. In no case has a teacher left school before its proper time of closing, and in no case has a teacher been seriously censured by any of his employers. The adverb "*seriously*," as used above, is supposed to cover a few exceptions which will probably be found in every town till the Millenium, but they are not worthy of notice. Except in three instances, the twenty-seven schools in town during the year have been entirely successful, and these three have not been total failures.

One trouble with us is the use of *favoritism* in securing teachers. There are, as is well known, more teachers in the market than schools; and from the day when the Committee is elected—sometimes even from the hour of the adjournment of the school meeting—the poor man is besieged with applications, till, in self-defence, he decides the question by hiring one of the applicants. But more frequently the aspiring school ma'am enlists the services of some quick spoken friend, who by virtue of the first nomination secures the appointment of another friend as Committee. It is really ludicrous sometimes to see the efforts of this kind that are made, and sometimes I have wondered if it wouldn't be better to push our democratic principles a little further, and let the vote of the District, at the Annual or Semi-Annual School Meeting be upon the *teacher*, instead of the *Committee*. The *best teacher* would then stand a better chance of being hired than the Committee's third wife's grandmother's cousin, and thus the best interests of the school would be more likely to be reached.

I have ascertained from conversation with teachers that the Teacher's Institutes have done much good. I would speak particularly of the one held at Greensboro two months ago. The teachers of this town attended generally, and I noticed afterwards a decided improvement in their schools, especially those of some of the younger ones. I think the importance of these Institutes cannot be over-estimated, and I am pleased to notice that the people in general are coming to see more of the advantage of them, and to be willing to derive instruction from them. This is one of the most hopeful signs with regard to our Vermont Schools—the breaking up, in the popular mind, of that bigoted old-fogyism which sneers at progress, and contents itself with treading in its grandfather's footsteps merely for their own sake. It is well known that these Institutes agitate new things and suggest improvements. They have, therefore, been styled *innovations*, and condemned by the masses, but the last five years have witnessed a decided advancement in this respect. And yet the work of

renewing the public mind is not more than half done, and there is plenty more of work for us to do in regard to this matter of Institutes and other matters kindred to it. All such movements will receive my hearty coöperation. I engage in them with more than ordinary interest, for I feel that the future of our schools, and through them the future of Vermont, depends on them.

E. P. WILD, Craftsbury.

My impression is that there are but very few of the children of school ages in Derby, who do not attend school some during the year, either in summer or winter. But still, the average attendance is fearfully small. That of our 533 children, only 261 should be in constant attendance at school, at least six months in the year, is truly lamentable. Can anything but legislation remedy this evil?

Our people are coming to employ female teachers mostly, even in the winter. We have some excellent male teachers, but for some reason, our female teachers are, as a general thing, out-doing them. They not only teach as well, but govern as well, on an average, if not even better.

Keep up your Teachers' Institutes, and if the young men will *not* attend them,—if the *girls* will only come, the cause of Education will not be suffered to lag. And if our girls are to be our main educators, why should they not be encouraged to *qualify themselves* for the work of teaching, by being compensated for their labor in proportion to the value of their services? If the ladies can do, and will do it *well*, the work of men, why should they not have the pay?

Most of our schools have done well during the year past, but some of them not as well as they might with better rooms and school fixtures. We have not a first-rate school house in town, and some of them are decidedly bad. Improvements are desired, and to some extent expected.

Two branches, I wish, could receive more attention than they do, viz.: Singing and Mental Arithmetic. Few of our teachers can sing at all. Would that they all could and would. There ought to be singing in all our schools. But few of our teachers seem to know how to teach Intellectual Arithmetic to advantage. They ought to be able to make it very *interesting*; and most scholars, young and old, should be exercised in it a little every day. Almost any Mental Arithmetic is better than none, but none besides, has yet appeared, as good as Colburn's.

JAMES P. STONE, Derby.

The average age of the teachers employed in this town the past year is about twenty-one years. We need older and better teachers, but shall never have them until we pay better wages for teaching. A teacher should be a person of rare ability; should be able to present facts in the most convincing manner; should be an impressive speaker and able debater. A man who would not make a first-rate attorney, is not likely to make a good teacher. If the wages of teachers were doubled we could educate our children cheaper than at present.

Classes should take "places" in all recitations. It is irksome and injurious to both mental and physical health, to be forced to the performance of any kind of labor, without a personal interest to give the needed impulse which always makes labor effective, easy and agreeable. Therefore no pains should be spared to awaken an interest in scholars by all laudable means; and teachers, Superintendents and parents should earnestly unite their efforts for this purpose.

F. P. CHENEY, Glover.

During the past year there has been decided improvement in the schools of most of the Districts here. For a number of years past, some of the Districts have been steadily advancing the cause of education in their midst, and elevating the tone and character of their schools. Some few strong, intelligent, energetic men have taken the schools under their charge; have engaged good

teachers, and have aroused the parents and children in the work of elevating the schools from a low and feeble condition to a strong, healthy position; and have created in the people an earnest desire that their children shall become refined and intelligent scholars. In a few of the Districts, the effort to promote the education of the children and elevate the standard of scholarship in the pupil and in the teacher is feeble, and, in some cases, unavailing. Teachers have been wanting in culture, energy and enthusiasm; and the attendance of scholars has been irregular, and the parents have almost entirely neglected the school room. As stated in my report to the town, in some of the Districts the teachers have been thorough in their teaching, and have endeavored with a commendable degree of perseverance to discipline the minds of pupils, to strengthen the memory, and to compel them, in recitations especially, to rely on themselves, and thus to become independent scholars, instead of being simply the mouth-piece of the teacher, and merely repeating the recitation after him. But in a majority of the schools, the scholars are entirely too dependent on the teacher in almost every exercise, and in some cases the teacher would do nearly all the reciting, while the scholar would follow on, vainly attempting to make a fair imitation. This is a great evil, and is almost entirely the fault of teachers. They should not assume to recite for the scholar, nor aid him at all in recitation, unless it is by way of illustration, and not then, until he has tested the memory and thinking powers of the scholar to the utmost. In a few of the schools I visited, it was almost impossible to test at all the intellectual acquirements of scholars, because they would be prompted so much by the teacher in recitation. Such teaching is doing lasting injury to the minds of pupils; deprives a school of all mental discipline; weakens the mind and memory, and robs the pupil of what little opportunity he may have in our short terms of school to become an independent scholar. The examination of teachers at the Institutes, and the establishment of Normal Schools in the State by the recent enactments of the Legislature will be highly beneficial to our Common School system, and will tend greatly to elevate the standard of the qualifications. The greatest defect in our Common Schools is that so many persons are allowed to teach when they are so poorly qualified. Teachers should not dream of teaching school until they have become thinking, laborious students, and thorough, well prepared scholars themselves. The teachers should "burn the midnight oil,"—*study*; furnish his mind richly with good sound learning, and discipline himself in the art of explaining and elucidating the facts and truths of learning to others, before he should attempt to teach school. But, in many cases, it is far otherwise. Many persons have the assurance to make applications to teach without making any preparation, or, if they make any, it is only a kind of examining process, which they perform two or three days previous to the time of examination.

Normal Schools can, and without doubt will, remedy this serious defect. No teacher should be allowed to pass from its portals with a certificate, unless he is a sound, intelligent scholar, and a thorough scholar.

CHARLES I. VAIL, Irasburgh.

The School Register is undoubtedly a good thing and indispensable to the school room. It is, in fact, almost the first step towards order and regularity. The teacher sees at once its practicability, and the school soon learn the necessity of being in the school room at 9 a. m., in order to avoid the tardy mark, which, to any scholar's mind that has any ambition at all, must appear obnoxious.

We are so far back, that the lively influence created by Teachers' Institutes in the immediate vicinity in which they are held, hardly reaches us, except through the columns of the press. Yet the influence is felt by some, but not

to that degree that it would be if we were all able to attend those in our own County.

As for Annual Reports, there can be no doubt but what they are of the greatest importance of anything that can be circulated among the masses, as far as education is concerned, and, in my opinion, should be circulated more extensively than at present. If it were possible, every family in the State should have one annually. As it is, every one that is entitled to one should take pains, after having perused it himself, to pass it around, and, by doing that, each one in the District would have a chance of seeing what the friends of education are doing and suggesting.

H. D. CHAMBERLIN, Jay.

School Registers are a very important source of information, and I am happy to say are more properly kept than formerly.

The idea of giving teachers a steady boarding place is taking pretty well in this town.

With the commencement of the winter schools we begin to have weekly meetings of the teachers and their schools, for the purpose of consulting upon the best modes of government and instruction, with a general review of all the branches taught in the day schools, with declamations, essays, &c. These were profitable and interesting to all.

P. B. SMITH, Lowell.

The schools here are gradually improving. In some of the Districts the change is hardly perceptible, while others are advancing with rapid strides. During the past year nearly all the schools have been successful, and the partial failures have resulted more from the want of a hearty coöperation on the part of parents than from any other cause.

Teachers are taking more pains to become fully qualified for their work, and more pride in the progress of their pupils than heretofore.

All the Registers have been kept neatly and correctly—a great improvement over former years. We still find many people in town who make sport of the school law, and say that the whole thing is a farce, and who profess to believe that our schools would be better off with no legislation and no Superintendent to look after their interests. But the number is rapidly diminishing, and the legal voters in town voted, at their Annual March Meeting, to pay their Superintendent one dollar a day for his services, in addition to the munificent remuneration allowed by the State. Surely the world moves!

The Teachers' Institute was held in a remote part of the County, and but few of our teachers attended. But the good effect of the Institute held here the previous winter, is still felt and appreciated. We think that the recent enactments providing for Normal Schools, if fully carried out, will be of incalculable benefit to our school system. It must result in great thoroughness in elementary instruction, which is the chief end and aim of our Common Schools. A great proportion of our population get their discipline and mental training entirely from the Common School; and, as the school is too often managed, it would seem that a special effort was made to have the scholars obtain the least, instead of the greatest good, from the time and labor expended. We hope the time will soon come when the minds of pupils will be led by a thorough and systematic training through the whole round of studies from the Alphabet to Algebra. It is only in this way that their faculties can be developed, and the greatest good be obtained from our Common Schools.

D. K. SIMONDS, Newport.

I am much pleased with the recent act of the Legislature as regards the examination of teachers. It will have a strong tendency to elevate our teachers as a class, and thus must elevate our schools.

JOHN M. GROW, Jr., Salem.

The Schools in this town during the past year, especially the last term, have been unusually good. This I attribute chiefly to the fact that teachers of experience, have generally been secured without regard to the additional expense.

New, commodious and attractive school houses are fast being erected, leaving but one disgraceful relic of "ye olden time" in town. A marked improvement in the tone of public feeling with respect to Common Schools is apparent here, which is owing wholly, I think, to the important statistical information of our School Registers, the Secretary's Annual Reports, and Teacher's Institutes.

But one opinion in reference to boarding around, is entertained by thoughtful, intelligent men, and that is in support of recent legislation respecting it.

I rejoice that the time appears not far distant when our schools will be taught by men and women, especially qualified and fitted for their important work by a thorough course of normal instruction. What is needed in our teachers is, not so much an increased amount of "book knowledge," as skill in governing, tact in teaching, and enthusiastic self devotion to their labors. We may confidently expect such results from our Normal Schools.

One word with regard to the semi-annual examination of teachers. The law requiring candidates to be present at the public examination, has come to be almost wholly disregarded. Reason, entreaty, and even *threats*, have been employed by the Superintendent, to no purpose. Would it not be wise to dispense with town examinations entirely, and issue licenses only at the Institutes and Normal Schools? I think such a course would materially elevate the standard of qualifications in teachers, and tend to make permanent their profession.

GEO. E. WEST, Troy.

In regard to the Registers, I esteem their use as most desirable in the Schools. Parents visiting the Schools are often surprised to learn what otherwise they might be slow to believe, that their children do not reach school every day they start for it, and do not of themselves report but what they get there. In my report to the town, I figured to the people the actual loss from absence, of the money expended for schools, and the fraction was so large as to be very alarming in some Districts. This, and want of thoroughness in elementary instruction, I regard as the cause of a fearful waste of the money appropriated for school purposes. A dragging, slovenly method is acquired in the school, and the influence is never overcome. I am looking for the Normal Schools to do very much to remedy this matter. I have just had the privilege of calling in to the one at Johnson, and my hopes in this direction have been raised higher than before. I am convinced that not one-fourth the advantage is derived from our Schools which we ought to expect, and a great part of the waste arises from the stupid, unworkmanlike way the mind of the pupil does its work in the early stages of education. The habit becomes fixed and more than ten times the minutes are consumed in doing a given amount of work than are needed. This thoroughness of instruction, I have long been convinced, must commence by a Normal School; and, as you very well know, I have been for years calling as loudly as I was able, for a Normal School. If they can be supported in no other way, the districts had better appropriate half their money to send their teachers to this School, and shorten the Schools in every District in the State, one-half, having a thorough teacher the other half. The schools will then be worth twice as much to the public as they are now. With regard to examination of teachers at the Institutes, I should hold up both hands for that. As to supervision of the Schools by a Town Superintendent, I know their work has been poor enough; but I hope a better system will be devised before that becomes extinct by law. I would be glad to see a competent Committee in each District to do that, and classify and prescribe all their studies, virtually grading the School. But I suppose laws will not bring about that state of things; public sentiment will, however, and I hope the time for that thing is not far distant.

A. A. SMITH, Westfield.

Inasmuch as I am a little behind the time in making this report, I will only briefly respond to your request. From what observations I have made, relative to the working and utility of the various laws that regulate our Common School System, I am convinced that the School Registers, Teachers' Institutes, and Annual Reports are doing much to create a more general interest in Common School Education. I wish the Secretary's Annual Reports could be put into the hands of every family.

An examination of teachers by a Town Superintendent is, perhaps, better than no examination, yet I think that an examination at the Institutes would be much better, for Town Superintendents are often, by surrounding circumstances, induced to grant certificates, when the examination has not been satisfactory.

Our school teachers, at least many of them, are, to a great extent, deficient in thoroughness, especially in elementary instruction, but they are not to be blamed; they have not had an opportunity to be educated for school teachers, and I think the enactment providing for Normal Schools, is a great move in the right direction. I hope there will be one established in every county.

I think, upon the whole, the schools in this town have been improved; yet there is room for further improvement. The teachers employed the past year have nearly all been young and new beginners, and have done their best to make the schools a success. Had the parents manifested as much interest and acted their part as well as the teachers, as poorly qualified as they were, I think there would have been much more progress made. It cannot be expected that scholars poorly furnished with books, and that are allowed to be absent one or two days weekly and tardy nearly all of the time, will make much progress.

C. GIBSON, Westmore.

We have four school houses nearly new; two were built the past year, and still the work should go on. Where there is a new school house, we almost invariably find there is more interest manifested by scholar and teacher, than in an old one, bereft of all that is valuable save the teacher and a few scholars, who are compelled to leave their pleasant homes to enter so dismal a place.

I think Teachers' Institutes may be a great benefit, and should be attended by all teachers.

The legislation of the State in regard to "boarding around" is good. In nearly all the Districts in town, the teacher is boarded at one place, save by the vote of some Districts, the best and most convenient families board out their tax. The rest of the time they are boarded at one place.

With regard to Normal Schools, I consider them very useful in preparing teachers for their great and important work of training our youth.

NATHAN DAVIS, Chittenden.

I rejoice that the State has provided for at least one Normal School. And, in my opinion, one, well conducted, is all that the State needs.

In my report to the Town Meeting, which has not been printed, I said:

"I regret to say that the Schools of the winter have, several of them, failed to be successful and profitable, partly on account of lack of tact, qualifications and interest, on the part of teachers; partly, no doubt, for lack of interest on the part of Prudential Committees and the People generally; and in one or two instances, probably, because the teacher was not properly sustained in governing the school.

"I wish to call the attention of my fellow citizens to two things of very great importance to the success of our Schools.

"1. Great pains should be taken, and expense should not be spared, to secure teachers of good character, well qualified to instruct, and capable of managing a school so as to ensure good order. I need not enlarge upon this. The first requisite for good schools are good teachers. It is impossible to have successful

schools with poor teachers. It is much better to pay a good, competent, thorough teacher high wages and have a short school, if necessary, than to employ a cheap, poor, or even middling teacher, twice as long a time for the same money. A good School of two months is worth a great deal more than a poor one, or one that is just passable, for four months. If a school is decidedly poor, or a total failure, the shorter it is, the better.

"2. Our Schools can hardly be successful in such *poor school houses* as most of the Districts have. The people of this town ought to expend at least \$10,000 in building and furnishing school houses, within the next five years. But I have already spoken, in previous reports, of the very great need of better houses, and will not enlarge upon this topic here. A word to the *wise* is sufficient.

"Let me close by expressing the hope that the School Report (of the Board of Education) in the hands of District Clerks, will be read by the people generally."

WM. T. HERRICK, Clarendon.

I think the Registers have a good influence in our Schools in inducing good deportment and regular attendance. There is great deficiency, as the Register clearly shows, in regard to irregular attendance and tardiness. This evil ought to be remedied; and in my opinion, the Register is exerting an influence in that direction.

The Institute held here last summer had a very good effect upon our people. It gave a new impetus to the cause of Education in our town, and the influence was so stimulating that the interest in our Common Schools has been increasing since. It is no longer a doubt but that the suggestions, and expression of opinion upon educational topics given at the Teachers' Institutes, are of great benefit to all connected with the Schools in the discharge of their duty.

The Annual Reports each year, are exerting a good influence upon the minds of the people. They are valuable and cannot be too highly estimated. A greater distribution of them, I think, would tend to still further improve our Schools.

The people of this town nearly all acquiesce in the law terminating the practice of boarding around. It is decidedly an improvement, and works well in this town.

In regard to the importance of a greater thoroughness in elementary instruction, I think there is a great defect in our Schools. There should be as much care exercised in training scholars in the elementary principles, as in laying the foundations of an edifice. But it is passed over and neglected too much, which greatly retards the progress of the scholars. But more blame rests upon the teacher than any one else. Too many who engage in the profession, are lacking the necessary qualifications, to induce a thoroughness in the branches they teach. There are too many who teach for the pay, and not for the love of the business. Such teachers do not have sufficient interest in the welfare of the School, become lazy and careless and the branches they are endeavoring to teach become too easily exhausted. I earnestly hope there may be an improvement made in this matter.

In regard to recent enactments providing for Normal Schools, and the examination of teachers at Institutes, I think they are just what is needed. Under such an arrangement we shall doubtless have a better class of teachers, and nothing would improve our Schools more than that.

J. C. WILLIAMS, Danby.

Inasmuch as you call for a copy of my official report to the Town, I would say in this connection, that in my report to the March Meeting—the *first*, I believe, which was ever made in this town, occupying some thirty minutes in the reading, and got before the meeting only after all other business had been dispatched

and many had left, it even being intimated that no report was required. In my report I called attention to remarks of the Secretary on the importance of accuracy and greater care in keeping and returning the Registers; and suggested that the business of Education might with propriety be made the *first* instead of *last* thing done at Town Meeting. After passing in review the several Schools, pointing out evils which might be remedied, and suggesting the idea of a Union High School, as a relief to our crowded and overflowing school rooms, I called attention to the *usefulness* of more ornamentation and beauty in our school houses and school rooms, and to the great need of Maps, Globes, &c. The report was not only well received, eliciting many and hearty expressions of approval, but I think I may justly say that it had the effect to stir up a new, deeper and wider interest in Education and Schools. The School Meetings in the two village Districts, at least, never were so well attended before, and the importance of better Schools, of a Union or High School in our town is deeply felt by all our best inhabitants; one individual offering *to give* \$500 for a School.

The question of consolidating the Districts, or at least of supporting the school houses, is not the Schools, by the Town rather than by the Districts, is forcing itself upon us. In our South District, where the Register reports 97 children between 4 and 18, and they have no decent or fit school house, a motion to build one suited to their wants, came up at the last School Meeting and was voted down and defeated by the Irish Catholics, on the plea that they were to have a Catholic School in the town in a few years, and they did not wish to pay for building a new public school house.

I may add that some funds have been raised from an exhibition, and some ten dollars appropriated by the Centre District, to secure a Globe, Dictionary and Outline Maps for one or two of the Schools; and it was voted at the School Meeting to furnish window blinds for the village school house.

A. N. ADAMS, Fair Haven.

The schools in this town for the past year have been highly successful. The majority of the teachers have been qualified and well adapted to teaching. The Registers were generally well kept by teachers. As regards boarding around, I find in this town that most Districts which have heretofore boarded their teachers on the scholar, now compel teachers to board around on the Grand List, which, instead of improving the matter, makes a serious thing of boarding. Most of these are Districts where the roads are hilly and distances anything but encouraging.

With regard to Teachers' Institutes, I think them of great importance, especially to teachers and those preparing to teach.

E. L. WHITE, Ira.

The School Registers are regarded as indispensable in giving a reliable record of the condition and success of our schools. They were, with scarce an exception, correctly kept, and the questions rightly answered by teachers. The returns of District Clerks, however, were not all of them so exact. Several were incorrect in some particulars, probably owing to a misunderstanding of the question addressed them.

Teachers' Institutes are quite generally attended by our teachers, and are highly appreciated by them. The beneficial effects of the Institutes are plainly visible in a methodical manner of teaching, and an increased thoroughness of instruction—a change which is heartily welcomed by every true friend of educational progress.

The Annual Reports, I regard as performing a much needed work, in enlightening the people of the State in regard to the condition of the Public Schools, and the practical working of our present school system. I wish these reports could be more widely disseminated. Each teacher, at least, should be supplied with one.

The recent legislation in reference to the examination of teachers at Institutes, so far as my observation extends, gives general satisfaction.

T. W. DODGE, Mount Holly.

Shall Superintendents feel obliged to grant certificates *enough* to supply the wants of the schools in their respective towns, when there is a manifest want of qualification on the part of some of them, or shall they require a proper standard of qualifications and let schools be supplied with teachers as best they may? Almost one-half our teachers in this town, the past year, have fallen below any proper standard, but they must be licensed, or schools go without teachers. Vermont is a comparatively small State, with a large boundary upon other States; and upon this side of the State we draw many of our best teachers from New York.

The law in regard to Teachers' Institutes, and the examination of teachers thereat, would subject us to the loss of some very excellent teachers, and I doubt not, Districts bordering upon Massachusetts and New Hampshire would often lose their chance of getting a teacher of known reputation. Citizens of New York, Massachusetts and New Hampshire could not be expected to attend Teachers' Institutes in Vermont, and I think some arrangement to meet such cases should be made.

ALLEN WHEDON, Pawlet.

I think we see much more interest shown in the cause of education than for many years. We have one Graded School, to commence the coming summer, which seems to be the one thing needful; and had we three instead of one, it would place our larger schools in a position where something like justice could be meted out to the scholars.

In many of our schools there is a sad defect. Teachers have not done as well as was expected, and in some, not only have there been entire failures, but the scholars have acquired a habit of heedlessness which some more energetic teacher will have to work to break up. In my opinion, the blame lies as much with parent as teacher. Very few of the former ever visit our Common Schools; but be that as it may, we need better instructors. Persons who have been educated for the purpose, and these with energy enough to work themselves and keep others interested, will remedy the defect.

ROLLIN C. SMITH, Pittsford.

In my judgment, the office of Town Superintendent of Schools is an important and responsible one. One important part of his official duties at present, is the examination of teachers. It is proposed, after a few years, to take from the Superintendents that power. It *may* be exercised more judiciously by the proposed County Board of Examiners than by many of the Town Superintendents, but the difficulty, I apprehend, may be in getting the teachers to apply for certificates to the County Board; or in inducing Prudential Committees and School Districts to insist on a teacher having a certificate before teaching or receiving pay therefor.

At present, I suppose, the law requiring certificates is generally regarded; and while the certificates themselves are in some cases too easily obtained, and of little intrinsic value, in other cases they truly represent that for which they profess to stand—a somewhat adequate knowledge of the branches taught in our District Schools, and some degree of aptness to teach. I think it may be best at present to let well enough alone.

I consider it a decided shame for the State of Vermont to ask any one qualified to act as Superintendent to do so for the paltry pittance of one dollar per diem. If the office is of no benefit to the State, abolish it at once; but do not insult any

one at all fitted for the office by telling him that, in order to earn his dollar, he must spend a "full day's time," whether six, eight, or ten hours be denoted by that term. If you cannot hire a wood-chopper or a hod carrier for that sum, can the people of the State expect to secure any services worth having for such a miserable pittance?

It is sometimes necessary to hire a team and go six or eight miles to visit a school, and the State of Vermont, with extraordinary magnanimity, allow the munificent sum of *one dollar* for every day so spent, fifty cents a half day, or one shilling an hour! It is not wonderful that the very highest order of talent is not always secured? Two candidates for certificates to teach were rejected the past year. I extract from my annual report:

"It is always unpleasant to reject any application for a certificate; yet very obviously, if the office of Superintendent has any value, it is primarily and especially in determining whether an applicant has or has not the needful qualifications, and so in guarding our schools against teachers who are grossly unfit for the work. It is a duty to the applicant himself to keep him from a station which he is unfitted to fill; it is still more a duty owed by the superintendent to every school district and the town as a whole, not to saddle it with an incompetent teacher. In one instance, where a candidate on examination was found deficient in one branch of a common school education, the Superintendent declined giving a certificate, but granted a subsequent examination, at which the candidate did so well, that a certificate was then given; and she kept a creditable school."

JOHN G. HALE, Poultney.

Having been Superintendent in this town eleven years, I think I have given my views upon most of the topics upon which you solicit suggestions, and expression of opinion.

I think there is a great deficiency in elementary instruction in the major part of the schools. This defect ought to be remedied, and the only remedy, in my opinion, is to employ no teachers, who have not themselves received a *thorough* elementary instruction. The recent enactment providing for Normal Schools is a move in the right direction. It is what the State has long needed, but failed to provide. This is one great reason why Massachusetts has so far outstripped us in the efficiency of primary schools.

The legal professions are required to receive a thorough training in the art and mystery of the profession before being allowed to practice, and why should not the common school teachers?

I am not much in favor of the enactment providing for examination of teachers, at Institutes. I think the Superintendent ought to examine the teachers of whose schools he has the oversight. The more the law curtails the powers and duties of superintendents, the less efficient will that branch of the educational fabric become. It is almost a disgrace to a man now to accept the office of superintendent, and when the enactment takes effect I think it will be quite. The very idea that a Superintendent shall receive only *one dollar* a day, and board himself out of it, has a tendency to cast a disgrace upon the office. Therefore I am in favor of dispensing with their services entirely, as labor that is not worthy of a fair compensation ought not to be required.

L. H. HODGMAN, Sherburne.

In too many of the districts in this town very little interest is felt in the schools, and they seem to be kept up more because it is customary than from any real sense of their worth and importance. About one-half the school houses are wholly unfit for use, and I find that in most of these, cheap teachers and consequently cheap schools are the rule. Registers are in most instances well kept by the teachers, but district clerks either fail to make correct answers or make none at all.

GEO. J. CROWLEY, Shrewsbury.

Herewith I send you a *portion* of a report from the school Registers. They are so defective that it is impossible to gather from them the statistics, which would be of great value, if accurately made out in every district and town of the State. I hope you will keep on *agitating*, and agitating till you compel or induce the district clerks to make out their returns fully. I see in one instance a teacher failed to answer the questions proposed, and yet his bill has been allowed. If the school committee did their duty, that could not be.

All progress in intelligence as well as in morals is up hill work, and all that we can do is to keep at it and never despair till the end is reached. Wishing you much patience and abundant success. GEO. S. WOODHULL, Tinmouth

For three years I have been endeavoring to serve you as Superintendent of Schools. When I entered upon the work, I knew not your teachers; I knew not where your school-houses were, and still less did I know of what was being done in the important matter of educating the children of the town. In some of these respects my own knowledge has very materially increased, though whether I have really rendered any aid in the great work to which our schools should be devoted, of training the minds of, and imparting knowledge to others, is a matter upon which I should speak more doubtfully. I have found my way to each school-house in our fourteen different districts, on an average of twice each year. I have learned by examination, and by observation in the school-room, something of the intellectual character, the qualifications and modes of management and of teaching, and of over fifty different persons who have been employed as teachers during these years. Of the twenty-three different teachers employed the last year, only five or six had ever taught in town before, and six of them had never been engaged in teaching anywhere. Thus we have had an unusual number of new teachers,—some of them quite young.

Of some of our schools I could speak in the highest praise. Their teachers have not only possessed the requisite knowledge, but have shown an aptness to teach, tact in governing, ability to awaken in their pupils an interest in study, and to excite to thoughtfulness and earnest application; and not satisfied with going through each day the usual tread-mill routine of classes and recitations, they have been actually leading on their pupils, week by week, to clearer and more definite views of the studies pursued, and a conscious advance in them. Where a district has been fortunate enough to secure such a teacher, a change for a new term or school year is very undesirable. Let the old teacher come back, and with the knowledge already acquired of each pupil's habits and acquirements, there will be far better prospect of combined progress than with a new teacher.

While I can speak thus of some of our schools, truth compels me to say that there have been some comparative failures. And I have asked myself in the case of such failures, during the past or previous years, where the blame lies. A poor school during a single term, in any of our districts, is a great calamity. The children in such district not only fail of making the improvement they should, and lose so many months of time needed to prepare for the duties, responsibilities and enjoyments of life; but almost of necessity they fall into bad habits of study, or neglect of study—learn some things which better not be learned, and become more or less contaminated and debased and turned aside from the true path, morally as well as mentally.

But how is the poor school to be avoided? The Town Superintendent should, of course see to it that no one has a license to teach who has not the requisite qualifications, so far as an acquaintance with the branches required to be taught in our schools are concerned. Yet this is rather a delicate matter. A Committee wishes to engage a cheap teacher, and one is found ready to undertake the School, and the District may think it hard if a Superintendent will not permit her to try and see what she can do. In the same year I have witholden certificates

from two applicants engaged to teach in the same District—the last time with some fear that the District might feel that I was unwilling to allow them to employ the person of their choice to teach their children. But it is not the fear of the District, usually, that keeps one from withholding a certificate from an obviously unqualified applicant, but an unwillingness to seem even to be unkind to the person thus applying. It is not an easy thing to withhold a certificate from a young gentleman or lady who applies for one, especially if, as is usually the case, the School is already engaged. And I must acknowledge that I have in some cases given certificates, when a subsequent visit to the School has convinced me that I ought not to have done it. I rejoice in the prospect that the business of examining and approving teachers is soon to pass out of the hands of the Town Superintendent. According to a law of the last session of our Legislature, the State Superintendent, with two practical teachers associated with him in each County for the work in that County, are constituted a Board of Examiners at each Teachers' Institute. From this Board competent teachers can obtain certificates which will be valid five or fifteen years, according to scholarship. And after five years no person can teach in the State without the certified approval of this Board. This will compel all who propose to teach to attend the Teachers' Institutes; will tend to elevate the teachers' profession; will secure a higher grade of teachers, or rather will exclude those of a lower grade, who have managed heretofore to crowd their way into employment, and is, in fact, a long step in the way of improving and perfecting our School System.

As to ability or tact to manage or govern a School, this is a matter which neither the Town Superintendent nor any Board of Examiners can ascertain much by a simple examination: and if in visiting a School the Superintendent finds that a teacher fails him, he can rarely do anything to remedy the evil. We may make suggestions to teachers which will be of use as to methods of teaching, and may encourage them by our manifest appreciation and sympathy, and sometimes, perhaps may make useful suggestions as to the general management of a School; but when a teacher fails of maintaining proper order, through the want of that respect and love which should prompt the pupils to obedience, advice from a Superintendent will be of little use. In the government of a School, especially where there is a female teacher, the manifested coöperation and sympathy of the Prudential Committee is often of great service. But a Committee who would avoid a failure through a term of study, with all its sad consequences to the school, cannot be too careful about the person whom they employ. The incompetent teacher once in the school-house, the mischief is done. The competent teacher secured, with the proper manifestation of interest and support on the part of the Committee and of parents, and the School will be a success. Let a little pains be taken to start right. The first aim, as it seems to me, should be to get *experienced teachers*, with whose methods of teaching and governing you are well acquainted, and who have a well-earned reputation; who love their work and are successful in it. Yet, as experienced teachers leave the calling, others must enter upon it, and there must be a first time in the case of every one who afterwards attains experience, and every one knows that the competent person often does well the first time; but committees make a mistake who put very young persons into this responsible service. This is especially true in our winter Schools, where the pupils are somewhat advanced in years, and not remarkably advanced in their sense of propriety and good order, and are more disposed to be "a law unto themselves," than to submit to any restraint from any source—to place in such a School a girl of fifteen or sixteen or seventeen, is to prepare the way, as it were, purposely for disorder and disturbance. The employment of teachers too young—not perhaps for teaching, but for controlling and managing a School—has been the cause of some of the failures of the last and of previous years.

In addition to that interest in the School on the part of parents and Prudential Committees, of which I have already spoken, sympathy with the teacher, and a

manifest disposition to sustain him or her in efforts for the preservation of order and the improvement of the pupils; in addition to this there is needed in many families much more care in securing the regular and seasonable attendance of their children. Of our 584 children of school age, only 55 are reported as having been present every day of the School in their respective districts during the year; and there are over 5,000 instances of tardiness.

This irregularity of attendance and tardiness is a crying evil—an evil which teachers cannot correct without the help of parents; and parents, many of them, do not seem to understand how great the evil is. No school can do much which is liable to be continually disturbed and distracted by tardy comers, and no scholar can do much in connection with a class who is frequently absent from recitation, and is thus necessarily left with some lessons unstudied, with some principles not understood, and some difficulties unexplained.

Some of our districts need better accommodations for the comfort, to say nothing of the convenience, of their children while at School. The school houses in the Seventh and Twelfth Districts can hardly be made and kept comfortable in the winter, and that in the Thirteenth District—as some of the citizens there well understand—is inadequate to the wants of their large and continually increasing number of scholars. The Eleventh District have a good house, but it was allowed to get so much out of repair by broken windows and door, that in the latter part of the winter's School, there was too free a circulation of air through it to have it safe either for teachers or pupils to remain in it.

There are some other things which I meant to have said, but I do not think it wise to trespass longer upon your patience.

ALDACE WALKER, Wallingford.

But little improvement has been made in the condition of our school houses since my report of last year; but I think that our schools, as a whole, have improved. Several apt and competent teachers have been employed the past year, and a little more interest manifested on the part of parents and Prudential Committees.

S. A. FISH, West Haven.

The citizens of the Town should insist on an examination of their teachers as rigid and extensive as the State does, or their schools will suffer in comparison with those in other towns. It is probably the experience of every Superintendent of Schools, that those teachers who sustain the most thorough examination in all the branches of studies taught in the public Schools, prove the most successful and profitable to employ.

Let the citizens of every town in the State demand of their Superintendents a critical and extensive examination of every candidate for teaching, and they will generally find no reason to complain that their Schools are good for nothing.

J. S. SPAULDING, Barre.

It seems to me the chief difficulty with which we have to contend in bringing to a higher standard our Common Schools, is a tendency to make the Districts small, and still smaller. It is evidently so in this town. Schools of from five to fifteen pupils can never become first-rate Schools. The smallness of the Schools and Districts brings many evils in their train—such as want of money, want of conveniences, want of necessities, want of interest in pupils, teacher, parents; cheap teachers, cheap board, cheap school houses; no apparatus and as little schooling as can be got along with. And there follows from this also, I think, the impossibility of making examinations at Teachers' Institutes take the place of that of Superintendents as at present. If Districts cannot obtain cheap teachers, and about whom they please, they will not require certificates from the teacher. "We cannot pay so much for schools," is the cry.

Normal Schools are doubtless an important element in a complete school system. But if teachers fitted there for their business ask more pay for their services than the mushroom school ma'am, they will be employed only in the larger Districts. We want competent teachers for elementary instruction, and perhaps, if no teachers but such *could* be employed the Districts would be compelled to pay more, and that would tend to enlarge the Districts, and to better arrangements generally. The fact now is, that not one-half the teachers of this town could pass a lawful examination. We are obliged to give certificates to all who apply, except to those whom nobody wants for a teacher, or they will put a man in your place who will. The trouble is, the Districts are very small, Schools about ten pupils, little money, poor and cannot afford it. If the people could be made to see it for their advantage to go a little further to School; but this generation must die first.

S. F. DREW, Cabot.

In reporting to you the condition of our Schools for the past year, I would say that they have been very satisfactory. During the past winter, evening Schools were held under my own supervision, assisted by the board of teachers, for spelling, declamation, and reading compositions. These Schools were held in the Town Hall, and the average attendance on the part of the scholars was 75 per evening; and much encouragement was given to our enterprise by the citizens, by their attendance.

Considerable discussion on the question of Graded Schools has taken place, and the larger part of our citizens favor the needed reform. By such a course, our present number (14) might be reduced to 9 or 10 Districts, thereby rendering our several districts able to have longer or more terms of School without additional expense.

MARCUS IDE, Calais.

So far as my observation extends, the examination of teachers by Superintendents, is almost entirely a matter of form, resulting in no practical good; and the sooner that duty is removed from them to fewer and safer hands, the better it will be for our Schools.

"Order is Heaven's first law," and the only successful way of maintaining it in School is by adopting the good, old-fashioned, Puritanic style of whipping. If a teacher is active, industrious and energetic, and is able, with the help of the "Beach Seal,"—the only true antidote for repeated misconduct—to remain "master of the situation," though other qualifications be but ordinary, he will succeed.

B. GOODWIN East Montpelier.

The School Registers of this town furnish positive proof of the well known fact, that the attendance, deportment, and progress of the schools, correspond with the number of visits, and the harmonious coöperation of the parents.

The Registers, I esteem, as the true corner-stone of our common school system, and without which there could be no correct basis of legislation. The teachers have done their duty in keeping the Registers admirably well; but many of the district clerks have failed to do their part correctly.

I regret to say that I cannot speak from personal knowledge, of Teachers' Institutes and Annual Reports, but their reputation for good works is established. The legislation in regard to boarding around I consider just; but it is evaded in so many cases, that we need a defining clause before we can receive the real practical benefit which it would convey. Greater thoroughness in elementary instruction is the one thing needful. School has attraction to the scholar that obtains a clear understanding of every item learned,—for they then have something tangible, and know that *study pays*. But without this thoroughness, their minds are left in a sort of a maze; they are uneasy, unhappy, and mentally sick; and they conclude that study don't pay, and they will avoid school

if they can. To surfeit the understanding, has the same effect upon the intellectual nature,—therefore mental food should be prepared in such a manner that it may be easily digested.

The recent enactments providing for Normal Schools, and for the examination of teachers at Institutes, have the general approval of the friends of education; and yet some who are friends only to themselves, are ready to cry, heresy. But when we consider that every great improvement, and every great discovery in scientific knowledge, has borne the same epithet,—and when we reflect upon the fact that the world itself has been dragged from the dark ages through the same channel—then may the friends of education glory in the name of heretics.

N. SKINNER, Marshfield.

I consider the Registers of vital importance to the improvement of literature in common schools. We have had thirteen schools in town during the summer, and winter terms of three months each. The Registers have been very accurately kept by the teachers.

Teachers' Institutes and Annual Reports are highly important for the promotion of learning. The recent legislation in reference to boarding is very proper. It is now fifty-three years nearly since I commenced teaching district schools, and I can truly say that during the whole time I have been well aware that elementary instruction has been too much neglected. The recent enactment providing for Normal Schools are very appropriate. I don't think that the examination of teachers at Institutes, who, if found competent are to receive a license for five years, can operate so well as the present practice, as we have in every town one or more men who are fully competent to make a public examination of the qualifications of teachers who will use diligence to promote the best interests of every school in his own town by frequent visits, constant watchfulness, friendly advice and instruction to every teacher under his charge.

STEPHEN HERRICK, Middlesex.

I am well satisfied that two months school in a year, taught by competent instructors, would be of more service to the youth of our State than the six months usually taught by indifferent teachers. Six months of routine recitations, in which the pupil's intelligence is seldom if ever quickened, or in his thoughts led away from the books into processes of reasoning upon the principles from which the books were made, may leave the scholar with an older intellect, but it will not make him a thinking, reasoning and intelligent being. Two months instruction, on the other hand, under a teacher who calls into activity every slumbering faculty of the intellect, who sets the reason to work to understand processes, who never lifts the student over the distance between premises and conclusions but makes him tread every inch of the ground for himself, will accomplish what is far better than laying up text-books in the memory, by arousing every faculty of the mind, and compelling the scholar to think and reason and work for himself. And while I am anxious to do no injustice to the teachers of our district schools I apprehend that quite too many of them are no better than machines which might, perhaps, hear lessons, work examples, ask the questions in the books, and maintain respectable order, but could never put themselves intellectually in contact with the intellects of their scholars, or lead their pupils one step where the text-books did not show the way.

We make teaching altogether too little a profession, and altogether too much an employment to be resorted to for a few terms while one is in the transition state from the school to the real business of life. Few of us would leave our children to the unskilful prescriptions of a young man or young woman who

had taken up the practice of medicine for a few months only as a means of getting money to use in learning some other profession. Careless as we are in respect to our health, we are yet careful enough of that to call in *professional* physicians when we are sick. But we every year commit the training and development of the minds—and frequently the morals—of our children to teachers who are quacks, who are teaching as a mere make-shift, who never feel nor comprehend the responsibilities of their position, and who only resort to that pursuit for the time being as the easiest way of earning money. If the children come out of the hands of such teachers without fatally wrong habits of thinking and study, it is because the mind like the body has in itself a power of resisting unhealthy and unnatural action, and asserts its natural direction in spite of the mischievous influence of false instruction. However “the twig is bent” its natural inclination will resist the force pushing it from its right line of growth, and in some cases may prevent a fatal injury. But this renders it none the less important that our educators should know their business, that they may be a help and not a hindrance to the development of the minds of their scholars.

The remedy for this evil, under our present laws, is mainly in the hands of Superintendents of schools. Unless a person has a certificate as a teacher, wages for teaching cannot be lawfully collected; and few persons will care to hazard their wages by teaching without a certificate. Superintendents, then, can greatly aid in giving our State a higher grade of teachers, by insisting upon superior qualifications in those applying for certificates. By the institution of Normal Schools the Legislature has signified its desire for a more thorough preparation for teaching—a professional training with particular reference to the work of instructing others. Undoubtedly it is contemplated, ultimately, to abolish the office of town Superintendents; or, if not that, to take from the office any power to grant certificates to teachers. But these officers can, in the meantime, greatly advance the cause of education by working in the same direction; and by the severity of their examination of candidates make their office what it was designed to be, a barrier against the evil of incompetent teachers, of quacks in education who do infinitely more hurt than good in the school-room. It is our pride in Vermont that our school rooms are open to every child in the State; But let it not be said to our shame that the teacher's desk is also open to every one who thinks money can be earned more easily by teaching than in any other way.

CHAS. W. WILLARD, Montpelier.

The Teachers Institute held here in January, had an influence for good in imparting new and important ideas of teaching, and in awakening a deeper interest in the work. The teacher's work is the “nicest and most delicate to which human hands are put.” The services of the Institute are too brief, and occur too seldom to give teachers that thorough, patient drilling which they need to enable them to do their work, “not clumsily and badly, but skilfully and well.” This must be done, if at all, in our Normal Schools, where they can receive the most careful training, by the best masters of the work. The educational interest of the State equally demand the Normal School and the Teacher's Institute—the Normal School to train and qualify the teachers; the Institute to educate the public mind to employ those teachers.

The friends of education in Moretown are increasing; many are getting tired of four and sixpence teachers, and poor schools, and say they are willing to pay what is necessary to enable them to have good schools. There is a commendable moving in school-house building. Three or four new houses have been built in town the past year, and there will probably be built at least two more the coming year.

There has been very little visiting of our schools by parents the past year. Teachers and educational men the State over, deem it of the greatest impor-

tance that parents do this. I would advise you to visit occasionally the schools, the place where your children, the "home jewels," the objects of your love and hope, are forming characters upon which their future usefulness depends. If there is a deficiency in the teachers to whose care you have entrusted your precious treasures, it will be noticed and remedied if possible. If there is a lack of books, as is too often the case, you will see the necessity for, and supply them, and you will also see how advantageous the aid to be derived from outline maps, Globes, &c., and have them provided; and the greatest of all benefits resulting from the personal inspection of the schools, will be in providing against that great evil that effects our schools more than any other one thing—the *irregularity of attendance upon the part of scholars*. It is a living fact that those scholars who have attended the schools this winter without being once tardy or absent have made greater progress in all their studies than those who have been more or less irregular in their attendance. Every day's absence severs one or more links in the chain of studies, and but a few such breaks are necessary to destroy the scholar's active interest in the school. Let the children be punctual at school, and the benefit will be in two directions. It will not only render the school more perfect, but it will also be lessening (unless all are alike prompt) the school taxes which are often the subject of so much complaint; for upon the *aggregate attendance* is the distribution of the greater part of the public money now made, and the more days attendance a school can have by lengthening the term or increasing the attendance of scholars, the greater the amount of public money will they receive.

T. J. DEAVITT, Moretown.

By no means should the Registers be abandoned. They are the ropes that hoist up to the sight of the public the ore of our educational mines. Teachers' Institutes, considered in the lowest sense, are grand social reunions of teachers and others who have our schools at heart. They continue, however, to have a stimulating effect upon teachers and the patrons of schools. They help preserve the public mind from *stagnancy* in respect to school matters. Annual Reports are heavy artillery. They would do much more good if more people could be got into their range. "*Éire away*." Too much cannot be done to make the elementary instruction of our schools more thorough. Not one school in five but what suffers from superficial and faulty instruction in the very rudiments of knowledge.

The recent enactments I hail with pleasure. Let the Normal Schools be filled at once by all who propose to teach for any length of time. At least, let such enter upon a thorough course of study in our first-class schools, which will fit them to pass the examination of the State Secretary. Let such teachers as have passed that examination, or are passing it, and have been approved—be first in demand by our Prudential Committees. Let the people be willing to give the new ones a fair trial. If carried out, they must inevitably lift the standard of our schools. Two other things will be likely to follow. The average wages of teachers must rise. They must be paid for the enlarged education demanded of them. And some of our small Districts, in view of the higher character and greater cost of a school, will gravitate toward the larger neighboring District, and two small Districts contiguous will be more strongly prompted to unite. The time is coming when people will see that they can't all have a school house in their door-yard, or within a few rods of home.

A. B. DASCOMB, Waitsfield.

I believe our schools are slowly improving. The Registers are better kept, though the answers of District Clerks are not always correct. The teachers generally do their part very well. We have some admirable schools, and all of them quite good.

I can see great benefit from the Teachers' Institute, and wish we might have them twice a year. It seems to create a greater interest in our teachers, which is very necessary in our schools. The old custom of boarding around is nearly done away, and most of the tax-payers seem to like the late school law of defraying the expenses of our schools-upon the Grand List. *Some old heads still stand out.* There seems to be lacking, in all of our Districts, interest among parents to get their children to school in season, and to keep them there. Parents do not visit their schools as they would if they had the interest that they ought to have.

Your Superintendent desires earnestly to express his conviction that there ought to be an increased interest in our Common Schools.

I do not think elementary instruction is thorough enough, but it is much more thorough than when our teachers were without the advantages of the Institutes. I think a new era is not far off in the more thorough system of teaching. The State Normal Schools will hasten it.

JOHN O. GLEASON, Warren.

Our schools during the year were comparatively good, though my ideal was not reached. The tendency is to secure too young teachers, the reasons being that they can be had for less money, and also, that good, first-class teachers can earn more in doing something else. Teaching ought to become a profession to which competent teachers would give their lives.

I tried to make my examinations as rigid as possible, in view of all the circumstances, looking forward to the early introduction of the system of written examinations, or perhaps a combination of the written and the oral. The usual oral examinations, occupying but an hour or two, with a class of teachers, comes very near being a farce. Its whole tendency is to lower the standard of qualification—already too low. I therefore rejoice that the written system is being introduced at the Institutes, and trust that the influence of Normal Schools will help this matter along.

I found teachers who could "do all the sums" in the book, but could not explain the rule for dividing one fraction by another. Others, with several terms experience, had no true knowledge of notation. In some schools I found pupils half through their arithmetics, who could not express a number requiring five or six figures. In spelling I found teachers sadly deficient. I pronounced a number of words, requiring the teachers to write them, and found, by examining their work, that in many cases nearly half were misspelled. In Geography I was no less surprised, especially when one teacher very gravely informed me that the Lamoille was the largest river in the United States. With too many there is very little practical knowledge of the art of teaching. The Normal School is, I trust, the beginning of better days for us in this respect. Too much cannot be said in favor of abolishing the system of Districts. The whole matter should belong to the town, and the expenses paid out of the town treasury, as much so as bridges. For example, some Districts raise ten cents on the dollar, others forty or fifty, and those Districts where the tax is lightest have the best schools.

We have a few poor school houses: and we have too many Districts in town for the good of our schools.

In December last, I spent several days in visiting the Public Schools of Boston, for the purpose of studying their system and methods of instruction. The Superintendent directed me to the best schools, where I found teachers of all grades, and generally very successful, so far as I could learn. Of course, being Graded Schools, they could do what our rural districts cannot do; but there is no sense in so many of our schools being no better than they are. I was most gratified with their results in Reading and Geography. The best reading I have ever heard, was by a class of girls in the Hancock School, a school com-

posed almost entirely of Irish. I was glad to learn that the master was a Vermont man, as were some in other schools. In Geography, Map Drawing and Physical Geography is made the basis of the whole study, and the results are highly satisfactory. I was also pleased with what I saw in Arithmetic—especially the practical knowledge imparted. The visit was, as a whole, not only very pleasant to me, but profitable also. Would it not be a wise plan for the State to agitate the question of compelling every child to attend school? Must we not take the ground that it is right, as it is, to press the matter? Too many, not only among the poor, but children of avaricious and wealthy parents, are growing up in ignorance.

The Superintendent's Report, so far as I know, has never been printed in this town, though always read at the town meeting. If the report is worth anything, is it not worth printing? No man is fit for a Superintendent who cannot prepare a report worth printing.

L. B. HIBBARD, Waterbury.

The recent enactment in regard to teacher's board I think a very good thing, and I think it receives general approbation here.

We have had pretty fair schools here the past year. Where there has been a *drawback*, the parents have been as much at fault as the teacher—as in *turdiners*. In one school the same teacher was kept through the year, and that school made far greater progress than either of the others.

Why is it that Superintendents receive no better remuneration? Most towns in this vicinity are troubled to get Superintendents for this reason. I consider Teachers' Institutes of great practical utility, as also are Normal Schools. And I have noticed at examinations that teachers oftener fail in first principles than elsewhere.

L. E. BOWLES, Athens.

I think our State is moving in the right direction in establishing Normal Schools for the purpose of giving a more perfect and thorough training to those who shall assume the duties and responsibilities of teaching. We have teachers who simply hear recitations from the book, and who never train their pupils. They are satisfied if the lessons are well committed, and they never trouble themselves thoroughly to drill their scholars in the principles of the branches taught. We cannot expect thorough training of scholars from our teachers, until they have had experience or knowledge of the art of managing and teaching school.

I find in some of our schools pupils using books, and pursuing studies beyond their capacity and proficiency. If scholars were detained longer in the elementary branches, and more thoroughness manifested in their instruction, I think we should see more improvement and less superficial teaching.

JOHN S. CUTTING, Brattleboro.

An important step was taken at the last session of the Legislature, in the establishment of a State Normal School. This action has special reference to the better qualification of teachers for their important work. The aim is to make teaching more a profession than it has been. I hope it will soon come to that, that not every one can go into our schools to spend a summer or a winter as a teacher, just to gratify fancy or to secure a little money. If a lady wishes to be a milliner, she will go to a teacher of that art for a suitable time as learner. Is proper qualification less needful for those who are to have the care of our Common Schools?

The plan of keeping a School Register in each School has much in its favor. The facts which these Registers reveal are some of them very humiliating. Yet it is well to have them laid before us in this authentic form. What can have more influence with parents, to make them in earnest to secure the daily

and constant attendance of their children, than to know the vast number in the State, of school age, that fail to attend at all. The collecting and publishing the facts on this point is having a good influence. I think the proportionate number of absences and tardiness is annually diminishing.

B F. FOSTER, Dummerston.

Too little attention is given to *principles*, the foundation of all science; and too much to *text-books*. No one can over-estimate the importance of being thoroughly versed in the fundamental truths upon which every science is based; understand these, and the task is half performed; have an imperfect knowledge of these, and you are continually in the dark. Teachers should understand, and some do, that it is not the number of pages that has been passed over that decides whether the school has been successful or otherwise.

Of Teachers' Institutes I have a very favorable opinion. Since they were first established I have watched their working and have become convinced that they are effecting great changes for the better in the schools of this State. Those teachers that attend them most, as a rule, are the most thorough and systematic in their course of instruction, dwelling particularly upon elementary instruction, to the certain advantage of the pupils.

The majority of teachers are more particular about keeping the Registers than when first introduced. Yet some are culpably negligent now. Upon the whole, I can report gradual yearly improvement in the character and efficiency of our schools. One or two during the present year were models of excellence; others were far from what they should have been.

GEORGE DRESSER, Grafton.

Although something has been done in the past, affording encouragement and hope for the future, yet, very much remains to be accomplished before we reach the beau ideal of educational excellence. In contemplating our educational interests, the thought forcibly strikes the mind, at the outset, that *very* much depends upon the educator. The teacher exerts such a controlling influence, that it has become a current axiom, that, *as is the teacher, so is the school*. Hence the standard of qualifications for teachers should be sufficiently elevated to secure the greatest possible efficiency. Partially qualified, inexperienced, incompetent teachers will never raise our schools to the point desired. All teachers need a thorough preparation for their responsible work. What an apprenticeship is to the mechanic, or the commercial college to the merchant, a thorough training is to the teacher. In addition to the ordinary facilities for acquiring a preparation, we have had, for a number of years past, Teachers' Institutes, which have been efficient auxiliaries in this important work.

The Normal School, recently established by our Legislature, with provisions for additional ones, will doubtless be a permanent and invaluable institution, where the necessary preparation can be secured; and all teachers, if practicable, should avail themselves of its facilities.

An apparent defect in our methods of instruction is a lack of thoroughness in teaching elementary principles and primary branches. It is not enough that the pupil be able parrot-like to repeat a lesson, or mechanically solve a problem according to the text-book. He should be familiar with first principles, their application and use. Moreover, reading, writing and spelling are too often regarded as unimportant branches, and the pupil is hurried over them to the higher branches, and never returns to them, and is ever after deficient in these branches of so great practical utility. Education should be eminently practical—preparing the farmer for the field, the mechanic for the work-shop, the merchant for the counting room,—in a word, preparing all for their appropriate work.

HUBBARD EASTMAN, Guilford.

I am happy to know that plain speaking one year ago has been productive of some good results. The interest has increased, and a better grade of teachers is being demanded than has sometimes been employed. The schools, on the whole, have been very good during the year. The Registers have been better kept. More interest is manifested in visiting schools, and a decided interest was manifested in the Annual Reports. I hear observations made about the Secretary's Reports, showing that minds have been influenced. More thought is given to the subject of schools than has sometimes been the case. Those in favor of terminating the practice of boarding the teacher around, are gaining, and some Districts which boarded the teacher around last year, have left it where the law leaves it this year. But all is not accomplished that we hope to see accomplished. Districts have not yet come to the point of furnishing books of reference, globes, or maps, which we believe would be of great benefit to our schools.

L. M. WOODARD, Halifax.

You solicit remarks on many points; on one only will I here speak—elementary instruction. Here is one of our greatest failures. The teacher does not love it, and the pupil passes over it unenlightened. This is all wrong. The teacher should enter a Normal School, and there be drilled, till he comes to understand and love the work of giving elementary instruction; then he may go forth a teacher worthy the name.

J. H. WOOD, Jamaica.

One thing I wish to state. I am of the opinion that in all large schools—in the winter schools—male teachers only should be employed. More schools fail for want of management than for lack of education. The schools in town generally, have been quite satisfactory.

E. H. HOWE, Londonderry.

It is a pleasure to record the fact that a majority of the Schools of this town, for the past year, have been in a highly prosperous condition. The teachers in the several Districts have attended with varied success to the duties assigned them, and in nearly every instance the service rendered is regarded as an adequate compensation for the expense incurred. In two instances, for the winter term, the Schools were taught by males, all others by females. The superiority of females as teachers of the young is, I believe, generally acknowledged.

I believe it to be of the highest importance that thoroughness in elementary instruction should be the distinguishing characteristic in all our Common Schools. It is here that the mass of people receive all the education they ever possess, and the most powerful incentives exist, to bring our Common Schools to that standard of excellence in the highest degree attainable. It were far better that our Colleges and higher institutions of learning should cease to exist, than that the Common Schools should not prosper. Let its door be closed for a generation, and the People would hardly be capable of self-government. In proportion as they voluntarily withdraw their interest and support, so far are they compelled to take an interest in criminal courts, jails and penitentiaries. I believe this State has been wonderfully benefited within a comparatively short period by its legislation in reference to our Common School System; and I can heartily endorse its recent enactments, making provision for Normal Schools, and for the public examination of teachers. Great and lasting benefits, it seems to me, must result. In due time we shall have a class of teachers thoroughly qualified for their work, and who shall make teaching a *profession*. I could give many reasons satisfactory to my own mind, why a public examination of teachers, conducted as the law contemplates, would be far preferable to the present mode. I think Town Superintendents will not oppose the provision relating to that subject.

There have been many important legislative enactments within a few years, and if properly appreciated and enforced, our children and youth, enlightened, fitted and prepared for active duties in the community, will become instruments in developing and maintaining all that is useful and honorable in life, blessings to themselves, and to those who may succeed them.

JAMES CRAWFORD, Putney.

I have read with profound satisfaction the enactments relating to the establishment of State Normal Schools. To my mind there are a great many advantages arising from this course, if vigorously pursued. There are at least three very prominent advantages: It adds an incomparable amount to the dignity of our School System; it adds very largely to the thoroughness of teachers' education; it will, if properly arranged, secure a greater amount of education to the people of the State, with less money than is now expended.

The act relating to the examination of teachers at Institutes, meets also my hearty approval. This plan, properly executed, must of necessity secure more uniformly good teachers, and will obviate the very unpleasant duty, (which the Superintendent has to do quite too often,) of granting or refusing a certificate to the "nephew or niece" of some very dear friend or acquaintance who happens to be Prudential Committee. Success to every branch of the good cause of education.

N. PIERCE, Rockingham.

I think we have made some progress in the right direction the past year. There are six Districts in town, in two of which they have erected new school houses, and in a third have pretty thoroughly repaired the old one. I think the several teachers report all our school houses in good condition.

If I judge correctly there is an increasing interest on the part of parents and guardians in the all-important work of educating the rising generation.

I think the Registers, faithfully kept, do have a disciplinary influence upon our Schools.

As to Institutes, I have never attended one; but I am satisfied from the idea I have of them, that they are exerting a vast amount of good.

M. A. KNOWLTON, Stratton.

I have repeatedly given my opinion as strongly in favor of School Registers Teachers' Institutes, and Annual Reports, and I still think that they cannot well be dispensed with.

All the legislation we have had with reference to boarding around does not yet mend the matter. Some Districts still persist in compelling the teacher to board around, and the board being estimated on the Grand List, the evil is more intolerable than formerly. Unless there soon appears some evidence that the custom will ere long die a natural death, I hope our legislators will kill it outright, and that speedily.

I am much pleased with the recent enactments providing for Normal Schools, and for the examination of teachers at Institutes. There now appears a prospect of a supply of teachers better fitted for their calling; also some reason for hope that school officials will hereafter work together harmoniously for the good of the Schools.

I think there is great lack of thoroughness in elementary instruction in our Schools, though there has been much improvement made in this respect within the last twenty years. Reading is neglected or poorly taught. Many of our teachers, though good readers themselves, do not know how to instruct in that branch, so classes are many times allowed to take their own course, and the consequence is they are often found selecting pieces and reading for their own entertainment, rather than with a view to their best improvement; and some

are found in the Fourth or Fifth Reader, who more properly belong in the Second or Third. Penmanship, too, does not receive the attention its relative importance demands. Some system should be adopted, and the copy-books of that system only used. I think our teachers should be able to pass a thorough examination as to their knowledge of the principles and best method of teaching Penmanship. Some of our Schools adopt the custom that prevails in Massachusetts, and keep but five days per week, and I think it an improvement upon the old plan.

E. O. LEE, Vernon.

Public Examinations do not seem to be of much account here. I had but two teachers at mine; and it did not please me. Let given days be established by law for every teacher to be examined, and then all teachers would know the time.

I think that the recent law for the examination of teachers at Institutes will leave us minus of teachers in the State. If they will not come out to the public examinations of Superintendents, they will not come out for examination at Institutes.

A. F. BLISS, Wardsboro'.

A few men are growing rich in this town and adding farm to farm until some of the Districts are without families. If this process goes on for a few years longer, some of the District must be abandoned, and our Common School System must yield to the Southern Plantation System. Is there no way to change the course of things? The property made out of the soil ought to be invested so as not to curse it. As it is, some of our once flourishing Districts are barren sheep pastures, surrounded by brush fence, and the owners seem to think they were sent into the world to curse the earth, and the more of it they can get to turn into bush and briar fields, the better. This avaricious, wicked, process is undermining our Schools, our morals, our religion. Degeneracy appears in every thing. The houses, barns, fences, men, and women look shabby and comfortless. Very soon the "coat of arms" for every family will be the muck-rake.

A. STEVENS, Westminster.

I have found that tardiness and irregularity in attendance are two great evils with which teachers have to contend. The hearty coöperation of parents with the teachers is needed in this direction, that these practices may be eradicated. In regard to our houses, the most of them are comfortable and quite well arranged; in fact only four are really unfit for the purposes to which they are appropriated. One very fine building has been erected during the last year. But I am sorry to add that *all* are sadly destitute of school apparatus. With one exception, there is not a single school house in town in which, either an out-line map, globe, dictionary, clock or thermometer can be found. I trust that our people will exhibit the good sense to procure these very important helps ere many years. We cannot over-estimate the value of the School Register; and I am pleased to note that teachers improve in keeping the same, and District Clerks display more and more intelligence in making their returns.

Important help in the cause of education has been derived from the Institutes and Associations held in the different counties. Such teachers as have attended these gatherings, have gained a more adequate view of the dignity of their vocation, and of the need of proper preparation for the right discharge their obligations. On the whole, I think the condition of the Schools in Wilmington furnishes some ground for encouragement. Several Prudential Committees have even visited their Schools during the year, and the names of several parents also appear in the record; who will say that these are not good indications? But there is needed a *general* interest—a *waking up* upon the great and glorious cause of education, before our schools will come up to a standard such as they

should maintain. I firmly believe that the recent legislation of our State will do much towards the accomplishment of this end.

It is true that good schools, good houses, proper apparatus cost money; but to what purpose can labor and money be applied, to yield an increase more lasting and valuable, than to properly fit the rising generation to discharge the responsibilities of life. Let the children of our Commonwealth have all the advantages in acquiring that which will cause them to be honored and respected wherever they may be situated; that which is more valuable than a few dollars, and which no man can take from them. Then let it be our constant concern to cherish and improve our Common Schools. C. M. RUSSELL, Wilmington.

I have long thought that the one great need of our State was Normal Schools, and am heartily glad that we have them at last.

I believe that there is a lack of thoroughness in elementary instruction, but think that the fault lies with the parents, who judge of the progress of their children by the number of books gone over rather than by their real attainments. I am sure we ought to have a better way for examining teachers than the present mode, and I hope the recent enactment will prove to be one.

ASAHEL UPHAM, Windham.

The Registers I consider a valuable part of our present school system, serving as they do to collect a fund of valuable information and exerting a direct influence in the schools. They have been as a general thing well kept and returned in due time.

The Teacher's Institutes are doing much for our schools. No teacher can afford to lose them. The teachers in this town attended and have adopted some of the hints and suggestions there given, much to the improvement of their schools.

The Annual Reports furnish much valuable information and are doing a good work. I wish they might be more extensively read.

I am in favor of the enactment terminating the practice of boarding around. The practice of selling the board at auction is nearly as bad as, in many cases, the teacher is sent to five or six different places during the term. I think it ought to be left with the committee to procure the boarding place.

I have been very much impressed during the past year with the necessity of some special training of those who teach, for their work. One great deficiency in our schools is a want of thoroughness in teaching, and this want is attributed, in many cases, to a lack of the proper means for a thorough course of instruction.

The Normal Schools will in a measure supply the want, and we shall have more teachers thoroughly qualified. The examinations of the Institutes will raise the standard of qualifications, and improvements in the schools will follow the improvement of the teacher.

H. Y. PARKER, Andover.

While I am happy to state that the schools, in the aggregate, have made fair progress, I regret to say that there have been some exceptions and partial failures in some terms, which, I think, might readily be traced to their legitimate causes; and without recurring to others, I cannot forbear alluding to one of these,—the insufficiency of some of the teachers who have partially failed to keep a desirable school from a want of that *thorough, fundamental* training and culture so necessary to successful teaching, and which our Normal Schools are supplying, and, I believe, are destined to fully meet.

It has been the good fortune of several districts in town, the past year, to obtain teachers who had received thorough rudimental training at the Orange

County Normal School, who showed at examination and in the school-room, that they had *mastered* those branches which the successful teacher must fully understand, and also the *way* to impart their knowledge to others.

And it is gratifying to think that we have an Institution among us so well adapted to fit teachers for their noble and responsible work. A system of Normal School training to secure this end, has long been a desideration. It cannot fail, if properly supported, in connection with our teacher's Institutes, of accomplishing a great work in improving our schools, through the labors of more thoroughly qualified teachers. Perhaps no better recommendation can accompany a teacher than a certificate that he has graduated from one of these institutions. The subject of reading is too much neglected, and too imperfectly understood in our Schools. The habit of reading mechanically over a stated number of pages at each recitation, without giving proper care to the style of execution—producing a dull, listless, unmeaning exercise, instead of comprehending and rendering the meaning of the author, is a lamentable defect in the commonly adopted system of teaching the invaluable art of *good reading*, which nearly all may acquire, but so few really possess. The success of the scholar depends very largely upon the teacher in this department of learning. A teacher who is a dull, mechanical reader himself, will be surprised to find how apt his pupils are in imitating and adopting his style.

As will be seen from the foregoing statistics, one-half of the teachers employed in town have been required by the old barbarous custom, to board around. The practice is a bad one, and is justly regarded with disapproval by all who have investigated the subject properly, and have the best interests of the cause of education at heart.

M. J. GILMAN, Bethel.

I think the Normal Schools, and the examination of teachers at the Institutes, will work improvement both to teachers and Schools, inasmuch as it will necessitate the qualification of teachers, and, by diminishing their number, increase the compensation. The wages now given teachers in this town will not warrant any large expense in qualifying.

GEO. E. SMITH, Bridgewater.

I think our schools have been far beyond what could be expected for what they have cost.

The object in selecting a teacher too often is, who will teach the cheapest? and when a cheap teacher is procured, they are too often left with but little or no attention by the District.

Our Registers are, I think, very good, if they could be always kept accurately.

The plan of Institutes is excellent where there is no Normal School; and teachers should be obliged to attend, and be examined by a Board at the Institute, and those who fall below a certain standard ought not to be allowed to teach.

I enjoyed the Institute so well at Chester, that I followed the Secretary to Bellows Falls.

As for the "boarding around" system, I have always looked upon it as a relic of barbarism, not to be tolerated.

C. G. GURR, Chester.

I regard the School Register as a most important wheel in the machinery of our Common Schools—it is a sort of dial-plate that tells us each year just where we are; marks our progress, or shows the want of it. I find that in spite of the clear and full directions given to teachers and district clerks, questions are misunderstood, and erroneous answers given.

I heartily rejoice in the movement to establish Normal Schools. If rightly conducted they will do much to elevate the standard of teaching.

While our Common Schools are accomplishing great good, they are far from being what they might be were a deeper and more general interest taken in them. So long

as we have miserable school houses, small Districts and low wages, what else can we expect than comparatively poor schools and inferior teaching? When our present system shall give place to larger Districts—to good, convenient, tasty and well furnished school houses, and to wages better proportioned to the duties and responsibilities of teachers—then, and not till then, will the millennium of Common Schools begin.

J. W. KINSBURY, Hartford.

I think the School Registers are an agency which could now poorly be dispensed with. They are a systematic help to District, town and State.

My experience with the schools confirms me in my opinion of the very great importance of thoroughness in elementary instruction. The lack of it, as witnessed both in degree of qualification and the practice of teachers, is, perhaps, not quite so apparent as is the absurdity of undertaking the study of a foreign language without a knowledge of its alphabet, but it is at least like building a house upon the sand.

There needs to be a higher standard of qualifications of teachers than Superintendents are able to secure; and on this account, particularly, I think that the recent legislation concerning Normal Schools, and the proposed change in the mode of examining teachers is decidedly a step in advance. The law which places the board of the teacher upon the Grand List, has undoubtedly had a good effect in breaking up, in a great measure, the evil of boarding around, to judge from the reports of Superintendents throughout the State. But in that regard, this town is much "behind the times." With the exception of two School Districts, the system of "boarding around" still prevails in town, the number of boarding places, of course, being increased by the change in the law.

In my town report for the present year, I called special attention to this subject, and urged a removal of the system, with all the earnestness of which I was capable. Whether any good result will come of it remains to be seen.

CHAS. W. CLARK, Hartland.

I rejoice in the recent legislation providing for Normal Schools, and for the examination of teachers at Institutes. I hope that the standard of qualification of teachers for their work will be much elevated when these laws shall come into practical operation. And not only this, but I rejoice at any modification of the present system of School Superintendency. At present the office of School Superintendent is one of the most laborious and thankless which it is in the power of the citizens of this State to bestow upon a fellow-citizen. The pay allowed him for his services is wholly inadequate, and such a pittance as is not offered for any other public service, unless it be that of a juryman in our Civil Courts. Think of a man traveling eight or nine miles over our Vermont hills to visit a school, and paying for his horse twenty cents a mile, and receiving for his services one dollar! It surely must have been supposed by our legislators that there was at least one man in every town with nothing to do for himself or horse, to whom time was a burden on his hands, which he would gladly remove for the compensation of one dollar per day for self and team. My own bill, which the law allows for my services the past year is, as you will see, \$20. If there is another man in this town who has done as much for so small pay, I am sorry for him. In fact, in many towns it is difficult to find a man to accept the office on account of the insufficiency of the compensation. True, the Legislature has passed an act allowing towns to make School Superintendents such compensation as they may deem just. But the towns will not do it. I know of but one town in this vicinity which does it, and in that town they are obliged to do it, because they cannot get a man to take the position without it. In short, the Superintendency, so far as my knowledge goes, is regarded as an unnecessary piece of machinery, and it would be easier in many towns to get a vote to dispense with a School Superintendent alto-

gether (did the law allow it,) than to get a vote to pay him anything from the town treasury. I fully agree with the feeling expressed by S. M. Whiting, Superintendent of Colchester, in your report of last year, that the law compelling Superintendents to collect a part of their pitance from teachers for private examinations, should be modified. If I have ever felt mean, it has been when I demanded fifty cents of a lady for a private examination. In short, it seems to me that the matter of Town Superintendents of Common Schools should receive again the attention of our Legislature, and that the office should be placed upon a more satisfactory compensation basis, so that a man can have the feelings of a man in discharging its duties, or that it should be discontinued altogether.

C. H. RICHARDSON, Reading.

In a majority of the Districts, the law raising the teacher's board upon the Grand List, has its application in requiring the teacher to board for a time with each family in the District. This is highly pernicious to the interests of both teachers and schools.

The recent act of the Legislature, constituting a Normal School at Randolph, is a movement in the right direction. A school of the kind is greatly needed, and, if patronized as it should be, cannot fail to give a new impetus to the cause of education in this State.

A. L. PRATT, Rochester.

In regard to the examination of teachers at Institutes only, as far as I have heard an expression, it does not receive favor. With many teachers it will be attended with inconvenience and unnecessary expense; and we fail to see any special advantage. The law provides for only one examination in a county for the year, and after five years from the passage of the act, no one will be allowed to teach without a certificate from the board constituted in connection with the Institute. It will do away with the office of Superintendent, for if he cannot give a certificate, of course he can not revoke it, and however deficient a teacher may be in governing a school, there is no remedy, except with the Prudential Committees.

M. C. HENDERSON, Royalton.

Being for years an Inspector of the School Registers, I find them more correct and better kept from year to year. I am persuaded that they are exerting a most beneficial influence in our schools. As to Teachers' Institutes one thing can be said in their behalf. Our most efficient teachers are among those who have attended upon the Institutes. The people appear to take a deep and growing interest in the Annual Reports. They are awakening the attention of old and young. I am likewise very much in favor of the recent enactment in regard to the establishment of Normal Schools in this State. They are an agency much needed in the cause of education. So also, I most heartily concur in the mode for the examination of teachers at Institutes, and in granting those who are truly qualified, certificates for years. This gives the power of approbating the teachers in our Common Schools where it most properly belongs, while it will be the means of excluding some bold pretenders who are not so well qualified to instruct the rising generation.

PHILETUS CLARK, Sharon.

The School Registers have been more carefully and accurately kept by the teachers, and the questions to Clerks more fully answered than last year, and I believe this return quite reliable. In addition to the statistical information obtained, I regard the Registers as an indispensable government agent. Most children dislike to have their

deportment recorded with a minus sign. Many of our teachers need to be taught *how* to teach. The fact is patent, that there is a lamentable deficiency in the art of imparting elementary instruction. Some of our teachers are competent, but many have never attended a single term of the Teachers' Institute, those nurseries of good schools, which have never failed to make a good teacher better. The establishment of Normal Schools will help to give teachers the right kind of instruction, and cannot fail of being very beneficial in training them for their calling. No other art is supposed to come by intuition, and teaching is not an exception to the rule. It is not enough that the teacher has a given amount of learning, and is able to *hear* lessons and correct the pupil when a wrong answer is given; he should understand the *art* of teaching, and be able to *give* lessons as well as hear them.

I see no objection to the examination of teachers at the Teachers' Institutes, and it will be much more convenient for them to have a long license than to be compelled to have their certificates renewed so frequently. It seems quite an unnecessary precaution, to require teachers of undoubted ability and established reputation to renew their licenses annually.

Statistics show little advance upon last year, yet our schools are comparatively prosperous. The town is liberal, voting extra pay to their Superintendent, and Districts pay better wages to teachers.

The school houses are mostly in good condition, and but few of the schools have had any serious interruption.

JAMES R. WALKER, Springfield.

Though the Registers are better kept than formerly, still district clerks need to give more careful attention to the making of their returns. And especially we need a more lively interest in the success of our schools among *all* the people. Parents need to co-operate more heartily with teachers for the government of their children. Prudential Committees should find time to visit the schools and know whether they are being well served or imposed upon; and the whole community need to be awakened to the importance of obtaining the very best of teachers at any cost.

If our free school system is the nursery of our free Institutions and the safeguard of our liberties (as we most earnestly believe), then every person should be awake to the importance of fostering and improving the general condition of our free schools. People should not grudge a little money for the best books, or a few cents in the *per diem* of their teacher, but their motto should be, "give us the *best* of schools and at *any cost*, and we will pay for them most cheerfully.

MARK POWERS, Stockbridge.

A large amount of money is expended in each town throughout the State, but money alone will not secure to us the benefits we so much need, without the aid of parents. When we have that aid, with earnest and efficient teachers, the value of our schools will be more than doubled. An encouraging word to a teacher, or even an approving look, a visit from a parent, instil new life into a teacher, and he will the better discharge his duties.

By examining the Registers we find many absent and tardy marks, one of the great drawbacks to our schools. Who can regulate this? The parents. It is a great annoyance to a teacher to have scholars coming in after school has commenced, and especially if a class is reciting. Then let the parents see to it that the children are in season and as regular as possible. There are in all our schools more classes than are necessary. I have thought that if a committee in town of two or more, whose business it should be to say what books might be used by each scholar (ascertained by an examination), were chosen, it might help to save the teacher much

trouble (for some are shamefully treated if they class scholars as they should be) and the number of classes would also be reduced.

I have had the privilege of attending several Teacher's Institutes, and consider them of great benefit to teachers as well as parents. Our school laws are very excellent, but all that is now needed is to have them practiced according to the spirit and letter.

GEORGE H. DEAN, Weathersfield.

The schools in town have been usually prosperous, with perhaps the best attendance of pupils that we have experienced in several years. The amount expended for schools has been equally large; yet no effort has been made by the districts to have more comfortable school houses, and attendant means of instruction.

There is a want of thorough elementary instruction in the schools of this town. With a few exceptions teachers have failed in this particular, and as a consequence poor instruction rendered.

M. C. EDMUNDS, Weston.

This region of country is not advancing in intelligent interest in common schools as most sections of the State are doing. If you will lay out special work upon this vicinity, in the way of a Teachers' Institute, and Lectures, I think the work would tell favorably upon the schools. Most of the teachers in the country schools have never attended an Institute. Our village teachers have had that advantage. I assure you of my personal cooperation in any movement such as I have suggested above, which you may make.

Our village schools are well instructed, by experienced teachers, who are employed year after year. These schools are successful. Our country schools are poorly taught by incompetent teachers, in most instances, who are usually changed every term. Most of our districts board their teachers at one place.

The plan for Normal Schools, and examinations at Institutes seems to me a wise one, and I shall expect a decided improvement in our teachers in consequence of it. Our village schools are Graded Schools, and there has been a marked improvement in respect to the systematic arrangement of studies, and the clear line of distinction between the studies pursued in the various grades.

E. H. BYINGTON, Windsor.

I am very glad the giving of certificates is to be taken out of the hands of Superintendents.

H. S. DANA, Woodstock.

STATISTICAL AGGREGATE FOR 1866 AND 1867.

Number of families.....	60,285
" children between 4 and 18 years of age.....	88,352
" weeks of school taught by males.....	9,252
" " " females.....	49,798
Amount of wages paid males exclusive of board.....	\$59,421
" " females exclusive of board.....	\$154,537
Amount paid for board of teachers.....	\$135,443
" " fuel, furniture and incidentals.....	\$49,144
" " erecting school houses.....	\$51,042
" " repairing school houses.....	\$21,206
" of Public Money distributed March, 1866.....	\$111,986
" raised on Grand List.....	\$328,603
" paid for wages, board and fuel.....	\$354,417
Number of weeks school supported by tax on District.....	35,911
Average attendance on School Meeting.....	12
Number of different District Schools.....	2,954
" " teachers.....	4,722
" Select Schools.....	348
Number attending Select Schools.....	9,264
Aggregate average attendance upon Public Schools.....	46,245
Whole No. attending school between 4 and 18 years of age.....	71,939
" " " " 18 and 20 years of age.....	2,469
Number of cases of tardiness.....	640,140
" " dismissal.....	88,070
" scholars having no absences.....	8,248
" instances of corporal punishment.....	5,944
" visits by Superintendents.....	6,123
" " Prudential Committees.....	2,901
" " others.....	41,078
Number studying Reading.....	63,327
" " Spelling.....	62,099
" " Penmanship.....	27,984
" " Arithmetic.....	42,068
" " Grammar.....	13,411
" " Geography.....	25,449
" " Composition.....	5,443
" " History.....	3,190
" " Other Studies.....	3,369
Number of Dictionaries.....	130
" Globes.....	223
" Maps.....	369
" Blackboards.....	2,449
" Clocks.....	140
" Thermometers.....	42

Number of Teachers that have taught before.....	3,240
“ “ “ taught before in same District.....	860
“ “ boarding “around”.....	1,525
“ “ without Certificates.....	88
“ School Houses in good condition.....	1,654
“ “ unfit for their purpose.....	901
“ “ with yards inclosed.....	322
“ “ with wood sheds.....	2,015
Average number of classes in School.....	18
Number of Organized Districts.....	2,409
“ Fractional Districts.....	214
“ Districts having no school during year.....	95
“ “ voting to have no school.....	25
Amount of Superintendents' bills as claimed.....	\$4,456
Number of Districts not filing Registers.....	150
“ Superintendents' Reports printed.....	24
“ Academies.....	58

Such is the aggregate of statistical information in regard to the schools, as accurately as can be gathered from the official returns of the Superintendents. Perfect accuracy is not and cannot be claimed for it, but there is enough of approximation to the truth to make it very suggestive, to say the least.

It is not possible to overestimate or overstate the importance of accurate knowledge of facts to that intelligent discussion of matters of general public interest which is of necessity pre-requisite to the formation of truthful conclusions, and to wholesome and satisfactory legislation. The statistical system pertaining to our School law is good: it is as good as any system in existence within my knowledge. In all the main essentials the law is sufficient, and little amendment is to be hoped from legislation alone. But in one or two particulars we can detect deficiencies in the law, which are of far more importance to the satisfactory working of the school system than will appear from a hasty consideration. Facts in reference to the schools must come in the main from two sources, to the Superintendents, and from them to the knowledge of your Hon. Board.

We must always look, in the first instance, to the teachers and the District clerks as the only sources of the knowledge which we wish, and if either of these sources become unreliable, our whole system of school statistics must measurably fail. An inspection of School Registers in any town will persuade any person of the truth of the statement found in almost every Superintendent's report, that while the teachers, as a whole, have responded faithfully to the requirements of the law in reference to keeping the Registers, and have year by year exhibited great improvement, the district clerks have, in very many instances, been very neglectful of their duty, and thus many of the facts of the greatest importance in obtaining a correct view of the condition of the schools are inaccessible, or are stated so carelessly or

negligently as to be of little value. It is true that the law requires the District Clerks to comply on their part with the requirements of the Registers, and provides that every district whose clerk has thus failed in the discharge of his special duty, shall be deprived of its share of the public money, and makes it the duty of the selectmen to refuse to every district delinquent in the performance by its clerk of his duty in reference to the Registers, and declares that every town whose Selectmen fail in the discharge of their duty shall be liable to indictment by the Grand Jury of their County. Such an array of legal requirements appears to be sufficient to do all that law can do, and yet the work is not done. A glance at the reports, as I have said, reveals a general failure in their duty by the District Clerks; the statistics show that during the past school year, one hundred and fifty districts failed to fill and file their Registers—ninety-five districts were without school during the year, and twenty-five districts by vote deliberately resolved to defy the law of the State and sustain no school during the whole year. It is worthy of consideration whether a special penalty in the way of a fine for non-performance by district clerks ought not to be provided in the law. Public sentiment ought to be awakened to the fact that where the Selectmen of any town, in violation of law, allow delinquent districts a share of the public money, they are not only violating the law of the State themselves, but they are combining with the delinquent districts in defrauding the districts that have discharged their duty, of money that legally belongs to them, through the voluntary negligence of the delinquent districts. It will be a good day for the public schools when an aroused and intelligent public opinion shall require the Grand Juries of each County to be instructed annually by the Court in their duty to the schools of the State; and when an occasional indictment shall remind the Selectmen of the towns of the danger of violating the school law as well as the laws in regard to highways and bridges.

EXPENDITURES FOR THE SCHOOLS.

The law requires the Secretary, in his Annual Report, to give an account of the expenditures made each year for schools, and, beyond question, very beneficial effects have been produced by his annual exposition of the cost of the Public Schools.

The aggregate expenditure for Schools is composed of the sum of the following items:—

The amount paid wages of male teachers,	\$59,421
“ “ “ “ female teachers,	154,537
“ “ “ “ for board of teachers,	135,443
“ “ “ “ fuel, furniture and incidentals,	49,144
“ “ “ “ erecting school houses,	61,042
“ “ “ “ repairing,	21,206

Amounting thus in all to

\$480,793

In this way more effectually than in any other, and indeed in this way alone, in many cases, can we succeed in arresting the attention and fostering the interest of tax-payers, of individuals to whom in its more elevated moral and social aspects education could never make any very effectual appeal.

DURATION OF SCHOOLS.

The duration of the Schools is an important item of the data from which we form an opinion as to the efficient working of a school system, and is a consideration which is apt, on all hands, to be much neglected. I have so repeatedly and so urgently endeavored to secure for this topic the attention which it really deserves, that I am half ashamed to press it again, particularly as I can say nothing new that will be any more effective than what has often heretofore been urged in the Annual Reports, and must repeat nearly what has been said before.

But the revelations of the statistics in regard to the matter of duration of Schools, for several years, have been so significant, that an omission of the topic would be inexcusable, although a renewal of the discussion may be tiresome to many.

The aggregate number of weeks of School sustained in 1863-'4 was 64,412; in 1864-'5 it was 63,284; in 1865-'6 it was 63,731; in the last year it was 59,650. Thus there appears to have been for several years a gradually increasing diminution in the length of the sessions of School, until we find that there have been in the last School year, 5,362 weeks of school less than 1864, giving an average length of School, during the last School year, of a little less than 22½ weeks.

This should arrest the attention of every one who desires the advancement of the general intelligence of the people and the improvement of our schools. It is believed that there is no other State in the Union that exhibits the same spectacle. If the improvement in character of the schools involved as necessary a decrease of the duration of their sessions, or if such decrease were usually found in connection with desired improvement in character elsewhere, then we might perhaps be reconciled to the decrease of duration as a matter of necessity, or of reasonable expectation. But on the contrary it will be found in other States, and indeed, elsewhere generally, that an increase of the duration of the sessions of the schools, is a general and indeed universal accompaniment of any decided improvement of the quality of the schools. Why then does our State stand thus alone? It cannot be from a diminution of the interest generally taken in the success of our school system, for all know that this general interest has for years been steadily and powerfully increasing. Neither can it be on account of a prevalent impression that an improvement in the character of the schools

necessarily involves a shortening of their sessions. But very little consideration is necessary to show that, others things being equal, the efficiency of a school system will be proportionate to the length of time during which it is continued in active operation. We are then compelled to suspect that there must be some peculiar characteristic of our school laws, that tends to produce this anomalous position of our State; for, with a constantly increasing attention to our schools, and an increasing faith in their capacity, when properly supported, to accomplish their work, sustained by a general conviction of the improvement in their character; there must exist some special cause for the decrease of their duration, peculiar to our system of school laws.

And indeed such is the fact. Upon examination of our school laws, we find that while in our State as elsewhere, there is a provision made by law for an annual distribution to each school district of a portion of the public money, that distribution is made proportional to the attendance of the children of each district, upon the schools in each district. And secondly, we find that the only condition precedent to the receipt of each district of its portion of the public money, is that it shall have sustained, upon its own funds, two months of school.

It is to be noticed in the first place, that a condition of some kind, either that school of some description shall be sustained for some specified time, or that some certain amount of money shall be raised by taxation and expended in support of public schools, has been prescribed by every State in which any provision has been made for the support of public schools that are free to all.

In this State the amount of public money thus distributed to the various districts in the State exceeds \$100,000, and is nearly equal to one-fourth of the whole expenditure in the year for the support of the common schools. That the distribution of so large an amount of money may easily be made, by affixing conditions to its reception, to exert a powerful influence upon the character of the schools is very apparent. It is a matter of great importance then, that the distribution of this large amount should be so arranged as to be conducive to the gradual improvement of the character of the schools in all practical directions, and to their more generous and judicious support by the various communities. And, if the school laws of the State do not secure this effect from such distribution as fully as may be, then the best good of all evidently requires that they should be amended.

To increase the efficiency of the schools, is the direct and ostensible as well an acknowledged object, of all educational discussions and efforts. But schools are mere instrumentalities, agencies, tools, so to speak, for the accomplishment of certain specific purposes, and the success attending their use and operation, will, it is true, depend greatly upon the intrinsic excellence of the schools themselves; but

not exclusively so, for the efficiency of any agency in the accomplishment of any given work, will be increased or diminished by expanding or contracting its sphere of labor, and by extending or shortening the time during which it continues in operation.

The average duration of the sessions of the common schools in our State for many years, has been quite small as compared with that of some of the other States, and indeed with all of them that profess to sustain a public free school system. This does not arise from pecuniary inability, neither does it proceed from a pronounced want of attachment to, or appreciation of the common schools. It comes simply from an absence of that frequent and urgent discussion which is so necessary to preserve a wholesome and vigilant public sentiment in reference to any topic of commanding social or moral moment.

That a good school is better than a bad one is plain enough, and is commonly enough understood; and that a bad school is something worse than good for nothing is beginning to be generally believed. That a good school, other things being equal, will accomplish more for the public good than can one of an inferior quality, is also as true as is generally conceded. But it is not by any means as clearly perceived and believed that "other things" not "being equal" the same rule does not apply with equal force. It is not always, or commonly true, that a good school that remains in operation only for a short time in each year after a long interval to be succeeded by another equally good, will accomplish more good than a school in some respects inferior, that continues in session for a much longer period. Very few are aware of the extent to which the possible capacity of a public system of schools in actual operation is diminished by apparently slight causes that are by most minds entirely unnoticed or disregarded.

A brief inspection of the statistical facts reported with special reference to their bearing upon this particular point may not be useless, it certainly will be suggestive. Beginning then with the legitimate hypothesis that the public school system of a State is organically intended to provide necessary instruction for the children of the whole State within certain limits that are recognized and prescribed, it is to be supposed to be adequate to the accomplishment of this specific object. The school system of this State then as it exists and is practically operated, is to be supposed to be adequate to give necessary instruction to all the children of the State in the specific branches of study particularly mentioned in the general law. And for the accomplishment of this general object the people of the State expend in support of this system, directly and indirectly, an amount not much, if any, less than a half million of dollars annually.

The whole number of children between four and eighteen years of age reported is 88,362. Of this aggregate number only 71,939 have attended school at all, and the average attendance has been only

46,245. But of the children actually attending the school, by far the larger proportion are, as is well known to common observation, quite young, and to them, as yet immature and almost entirely untrained in thought and study, it is a matter of so great consequence as to be indispensable to any fair and satisfactory progress, that such instruction as may be given them in their earlier years, should be given as continuously, or with as few and short intervals of intellectual idleness as is possible. When these same minds have become more matured and are habituated to hard study and severe thought, then a period of strong intellectual activity may occasionally or indeed often be succeeded by interval of comparative intellectual inaction with little prejudice. But with quite young pupils, habits of study and thought and intellectual activity are precisely the most desirable, because the most valuable results, that school culture can possibly give. But the average duration of the sessions of the Schools of the State taken together is, as we have seen, a little less than twenty-two and one-half weeks. If we look a little farther we find that with 2,623 different Districts, we have had during the past year, 4,722 different teachers. Thus it appears that of the 2,623 Districts, 2,343, or more than 85 per cent. of them have employed within the year the services of two teachers. Allowing for the effect upon the average duration, of the fact that the Graded Schools and the Schools in the more populous towns almost uniformly remain in session for eight or nine months in the year, it will be apparent that the average duration of the Schools in the smaller Districts and Towns cannot be longer than about twenty weeks. Taking all these facts together, then, it will appear that in a large proportion of the Schools the prevalent custom must be to secure the services of a teacher and sustain a school for two and one-half months, and then at the close of that term to allow a vacation of three and one-half months, after which another teacher is engaged and a school supported for another term of two and one-half months, to which succeeds another vacation of three and one-half months.

Manifestly, then, under such management, even if the two terms thus widely separated by intervening vacations, were taught by the same person, the children would of necessity be deprived of that prolonged and continuous necessity for mental activity, that alone can infix in their minds those studious and thoughtful proclivities that are the very best fruits of successful teaching. The little that is learned during the term of School, too, is liable to be lost to a great extent in the long vacation, and so the result of the whole year's instruction is vastly less than it might easily be under more reasonable and philosophic modes of procedure. Then these evils are immensely aggravated and the prospect of satisfactory improvement is indefinitely removed by the almost universal prevalence of the custom of discharging the teacher, however successful, at the close of the term, for no assignable and declared reasons, and enga-

ging a new instructor without any other particular recommendation except that he or she is a new teacher.

A prolongation of the terms of School, to be brought about by thorough and frequent discussion, operating upon public sentiment, and by positive modification of law, seems to be the only adequate remedy for the evils alluded to ; and as this matter has often been before discussed, I venture here to reproduce from a former report some suggestions upon the subject, simply because they present the matter as clearly and forcibly, and perhaps more so than any thing new that I can say.

In connection with this topic I deem it a duty again to call attention to the probable efficacy of a modification of the law in regard to the distribution of the public money in securing a prolongation of the duration of the public schools.

Regarding the necessity of general intelligence to the permanent prosperity of republican institutions as conceded, and in view of the undoubted pecuniary ability of Vermont to adopt all measures that are demonstrably necessary to her own growth and strength, it is not an unreasonable proposition to say that the public schools, where, as the statistics of the present year show, nine out of every ten of the children of the State are to receive all the culture that schools will ever give them, should remain in session at least for $7\frac{1}{2}$ to $8\frac{1}{2}$ months, i. e. for from 60 to 70 per cent. of each year. It would be better for the State that the opportunities for receiving a culture that is admitted to be necessary should thus be augmented ; and it would be better for the children that they thus for a longer proportionate time should be subjected to the moral and mental discipline of the Schools. All this is so manifest that as we look over the statistics, we wonder that the people of a State like Vermont, apt enough to take not a little pride in their established reputation for general intelligence, should year after year allow their public school houses to remain vacant for more than half of the time. This discrepancy between the ostensible and sometimes ostentatious appreciation of the theory of the public school system, and the actual practice under it, is so great that the immediate inference is that there must be, either patent or latent, powerful causes for such discrepancy. And a little examination reveals a feature of our school law, whose tendencies to shorten the terms of School are apparent upon even slight considerations.

Wherever in any of the States a public School Fund is found to exist, the proceeds of which are periodically distributed in aid of the various school municipalities, it will be found, and I think invariably, that a certain amount of local expenditure, to be provided for by self-imposed local taxation, is made a condition precedent to the receipt of any portion of the general public fund. The local expenditure is commonly measured by the duration of the schools thereby sustained ; and therefore the common proviso is, that no

school municipality shall receive any portion of the proceeds of the general School Fund, unless it shall have contributed to the support of its own schools a certain fixed amount of money, or fixed proportion of the assessed value of its real or personal estate, or, as is more commonly the provision, shall have sustained a legal public school upon its own local funds, for a certain fixed number of weeks or months. This fixed time, during which Schools shall be thus supported, varies in the different States adopting this method. In Michigan, for instance, the time is fixed at three months. In Maine no local municipality can receive any portion of the public money, unless it shall, during the previous year have raised by taxes an amount equivalent to sixty cents for each inhabitant. In Massachusetts, by general law every town is compelled to sustain at least six months school in the year, and can have no portion of the proceeds of the public School Fund, unless it shall have expended for teachers' wages, board and fuel and expense of making fires and taking care of the school house, an amount equivalent to \$1 50 for each inhabitant.

In Vermont the support of two months School upon its own funds, by each School District, is made the condition precedent to its receiving any share of the public money. And, in practice, the law not specifying the kind of school that shall be sustained by such District, a two-months School in the summer season, when no fuel is necessary, taught by a female teacher at little expense, is supposed to constitute a full compliance with the law. From the statistical aggregate, the average monthly wages of female teachers appears to have been \$12 40. The expense of a two-months School, then, would consist of two months wages for a female teacher, at \$24 80, and two months board, which, at \$3 per week would amount to \$24—making in all \$48 80. Now the whole number of children between 4 and 18 reported is 88,362, and the whole number of Districts, whole and fractional, being 2,623, the average number of resident children, between 4 and 18 in each District is 33. The whole amount of public money distributed in 1866 was \$111,986, which gives \$1 26 to each of the resident children between 4 and 18. Each District, then, having an average number of 33 resident children between 4 and 18, for each of which it receives \$1 26 from the public money for its compliance with the terms of the law by supporting a two-months school at an average expense of \$48 80, receives \$11.58.

It is submitted that such a condition precedent to the reception of a portion of the public money, is altogether too light and easy to give adequate and proper stimulus to the support of thoroughly good Schools for a sufficient length of time.

Again, whatever be the period selected, during which Districts or Towns are required imperatively, as in Massachusetts, or persuasively as in Vermont, to sustain Schools upon their own funds, as it is long or short, it will, by serving as a sort of guide, in fact control the time during which, for the remainder of each year, custom will require the

Schools to be open. In other words, the average duration of the Schools in the State will, in all probability, be less when the law imperatively requires Schools to be supported by local taxation for only two months, than it would be if the general law required the Schools to be supported thus for three or four months. Hence it may well be doubted whether the duration of the sessions of the Schools, and of course their efficiency, would not be increased by a lengthening of the terms during which the various Districts shall be required to sustain Schools upon their own funds, as one of the conditions upon which their receipt of any portion of the public money shall be based.

WAGES OF TEACHERS.

The compensation paid to teachers will always form one of the most important items in the great aggregate of expenditures for schools, and will always be carefully noted by experienced observers of the operating efficiency of any school system. And whenever other things are nearly equal, conclusions will, by such observers, be drawn favorable or unfavorable to such system in direct proportion to the increase or diminution of the compensation given teachers.

The total amount paid during the last school year as compensation of teachers, was \$213,958, being a little more than two-fifths of the aggregate expenditure for school purposes.

The regular and steady increase in the rate of compensation for the services of the teachers of the public schools is one of the most wholesome and encouraging features of the recent history of the operation of our school system.

The aggregate amounts paid for the wages of teachers in the last five years, were as follows: In 1862-3, \$153,297; in 1863-4, \$163,591; in 1864-5, \$194,513; in 1865-6, \$202,552, and in 1866-7, \$213,858, thus exhibiting an increase during five years in the amount annually paid for wages of \$60,661, although during all this time the duration of the schools has been gradually diminishing. This fact, looking only thus far, is very hopeful, as it indicates an increasing general appreciation of the importance of the teachers' work, and an increasing willingness to secure a greater degree of skill and success in its performance, in the only practical way in which it can be done, viz: by paying better compensation.

And a further investigation reveals still more ground for encouragement. It is, and for many years has been, within the knowledge of every intelligent and well informed friend of education, that the inefficiency of our public schools has been very seriously impaired by the continual absorption into other avocations of our more skilled and experienced teachers, and the employment in the schools of young and unskilled teachers. For these evils, or sources of evil, the only evidently competent remedies have always been conceded to be, a more thorough examination of applicants for teachers' certificates that will

exclude from the vocation those that are manifestly incompetent, and a higher rate of compensation that will retain the services in the public schools, of teachers of skill and ability. This has been true of all teachers, and it has been especially true of a particular class of teachers. For many years the educational statistics have shown a very steady and rapid substitution of female for male teachers, in all the public Schools; and the character of the Schools has by the Town Superintendents been reported as also constantly improving. But the compensation allowed to the female teachers has been always disproportionately small, as compared to that given to male teachers. Even as late as in 1862 and 1863, while the compensation given monthly to men was \$18 20, the compensation given to women was only \$7 72. In other words, in many Districts, where the same Schools were taught partly by men and partly by women, and equally well taught, nearly three times as large a compensation was given to the men as was paid to the women. Attention has been often called, both in the Annual Reports and in the oral discussions before the people, to the manifest and gross injustice of this universally prevalent custom, until, within a few years past, a change for the better has been apparent. This change is more decidedly manifested in the statistics of the past year than ever before.

In 1862—3, the average monthly wages of male teachers was \$18 20; but by the statistics of the last year, it has advanced to \$25 68, giving an increase in five years of \$7 48, or forty per cent. In 1862—3 the monthly compensation of female teachers was \$7 72; while in the school year last past, it has been \$12 40, showing an increase in the last five years of sixty per cent. This may well be considered to be one of the most hopeful indications of recent statistics. When the time comes in which teachers generally shall receive for whatever skill and ability they exercise in their vocation, the same compensation that would reward that skill and ability in other avocations, and when the teacher, irrespective of sex, shall receive a compensation in due proportion to their deserts, a long step will be achieved in the progress of our Schools.

CONDITION OF SCHOOL HOUSES.

The character and condition of the school houses is another of the standard tests which judges of experience are in the habit of applying, in order to form a reliable opinion of the condition of the Schools of a State. It is reasonably concluded that shabby and ill-conditioned school houses, when found among a people that are abundantly able to provide every thing requisite in the successful operation of a system of Schools, must be construed to reveal a prevalent indifference to the character of the Schools. This conclusion, too, is much more emphatic and certain, if the houses and other buildings, public and private, of the same community are neat, convenient and elegant. If this test had been applied to Vermont at any time previous to the last eight or ten years, the inevitable inference would not have been very complimentary

to the intelligent interest of our communities in the success of the public Schools. But since the organization of the Board of Education, and the inauguration of a regular and persistent agitation of public opinion by the discussion of the various phases of the general subject of Education, a decided and progressive improvement is plainly perceptible. It is true that the amount expended in building and repairing the school houses in Vermont is very small, when considered with reference to the pecuniary ability of the people, and the importance of the purpose involving the expenditure. It is true that there are very many not very large cities that expend annually in and about their school houses, much more than our whole State, and that our gross expenditure in a given time has been insignificant, still our recent statistics show an improvement.

In the whole State there was expended in erecting and repairing the school houses, during the years named, as follows: in 1862-3, \$29,408; in 1863-4, \$31,614; in 1864-5, \$56,765; in 1865-6, \$39,561; in 1866-7, \$82,248. Thus the aggregate expenditure in building and repairing the school houses in 2,700 Districts, for the benefit of some 100,000 children, during the five years last past, has been \$239,596; giving an average annual expenditure of \$47,919, in each year. When, from these figures it appears that only a little more than half a dollar for each child of school age in the State, would annually defray the expenditure for school buildings for the past five years, we cannot justly be accused of extravagance. But as is shown in the statistics, the expense of building and repairing the school houses has gone on steadily from \$29,408 in 1862-3, to \$82,248 in 1866-7, giving an increase in the five years, upon the annual expenditure, of 183 per cent., and is decidedly encouraging.

There has been a great deal said and written about the condition of the school houses, but very little known beyond the scope of personal observation of individuals. A question was inserted in the Registers for the last year in regard to the condition of the school houses, and teachers were requested to report them as "fit" or "unfit" for their purpose. Before examining the facts thus ascertained, it will be well to consider the probability, that, in most instances, the reports will be fully as favorable as is consistent with the truth. The statistics give us the number of school districts, whole and fractional, as 2,623. Sixteen hundred and fifty-four of the school houses are reported as being "fit," and nine hundred and one are reported as "unfit," while sixty-eight Districts are not reported at all. There are, then, probably, sixty-eight Districts without any school house, and nearly one-half of the whole number of Districts with houses, reported by those who would not be apt to report less favorably than truth would demand, as "unfit" for the purpose for which they were intended. The topic is worthy of thoughtful and extended consideration.

In all discussions regarding school houses it is customary to appeal particularly to the public spirit and pride of each community, as though

the principal consideration were that the building devoted to the use of Schools should be elegant and tasteful as a matter of ornamentation, and something of which every individual could be proud. This is well enough in its way, but is comparatively a feeble consideration to urge. The real importance of a thoroughly good house for the School is derived from a very different source. The success of every mind in the attainment of intellectual power and the acquisition of knowledge depends vastly more upon the relish—the appetite for knowledge through the process of study and the attachment to study and love of thought for their own sake, as well as for their being the legitimate means to the great end of knowledge, than upon any other or all other things combined. Schools of all grades and of every kind are valuable or otherwise, as they implant and foster those mental habitudes and cherish those appetites which can only be satisfied by study and thought, rather than for their common facilities for the acquisition of knowledge. The mere accumulation of useful facts and principles that are made in the school of any grade, will always be intrinsically and comparatively insignificant ; the power of the future man, his intellectual scope, and the position that he will take as a man of sound learning and intellectual power, the measure of what he can do, will depend, not so much upon the abundance of the means of culture that may have been within his reach, or the length of time during which he may have been subject to their influences, as upon the vigor and persistence of the resolution with which he availed himself of these advantages. A man may be exposed to a course of instruction however prolonged, that shall supply him with all ordinary and even extraordinary means and appliances for advancing his mental progress, and yet lacking any strong relish for study and love of knowledge, he may never rise above mediocrity. On the other hand, however limited may be the opportunities of another, if the nature of the instruction received, or the circumstances attending that instruction be such as to kindle within him an earnest, honest longing for an increase of his store of knowledge ; if there be through them excited in him a craving, burning thirst for knowledge, and a strong love of study and of thought for their own sake ; if his eyes can once be opened to the supremacy of the pleasure arising from the exercise of his divine power of thought, that longing will never fade, and that thirst will never die, but in spite of all obstructions, over or through all obstacles, he will go on while life lasts, conquering and to conquer. Who does not realize that the great waste of his own life, the source of his own short-comings, is directly and solely attributable to his failure to acquire, early in life, that inextinguishable thirst for all attainable knowledge, that delight in mental effort, which would have guided, nay almost forced him continually onward and upward ? Who does not recollect the feeling of intense relief with which the close of his school life was hailed ?

Herein will be found the real importance of the topic under consideration. Compare the too common type of the N. E. school house—

the unpainted square box, with regular apertures, at the corner of two roads or close by the side of one, with no yard, no shed, no fence, no shade, not a single shrub, with its pile of wood in front or stuffed into the front of the house on each side of the door, with its freezing floor and heated atmosphere in the Winter and exposed to the full force of the burning summer sun, with nothing comfortable, beautiful or neat around it,—compare this with some neat and elegant edifice, removed from the road, with trees and shrubbery and green grass, all inclosed within a neat fence; the windows handsomely curtained, with neat blinds to protect from the glaring sun-shine, with neat and tidy out-buildings, well ventilated and well cared for; and then say, in which of these two will those desirable mental habitudes, those strong, early tastes and proclivities in the right direction; that insatiable appetite for knowledge, and that paramount love of thought and study, upon which more than upon all other things, intellectual progress really depends, be most rapidly and certainly developed.

More than ordinary capacity are required to enable one to exaggerate the true importance of neat and wholesome and attractive school houses, with spacious and pleasant surroundings, that shall be neat to the eye, pleasant to the taste, and grateful in the recollection of the growing children of the State.

ATTENDANCE UPON THE SCHOOLS.

The statistics give us 88,362 as the whole number of children of school age in the State. Of these, 71,939 have attended school somewhat, but the aggregate average attendance is given at 46,245, of all between 4 and 20. The whole number of those attending school who were between 18 and 20 is given at 2,469. If we estimate the average attendance of this last class to have been 60 per cent. of the whole number, we shall have 1,481 as their average attendance. Then taking this average of those between 18 and 20 from the aggregate average of those between 4 and 20, we shall have 44,764 as the average attendance of the children of school age, i. e. between 4 and 18.

Or, to state the thing in another way. We find that of the 88,362 children of the State of school age, only 50½ per cent. have, upon an average attended the public Schools. Looking a little farther, we find the number of scholars, attending private and select Schools to have been 9,246. Estimating the average attendance of these at 60 per cent., we shall have 5,547 as the average attendance upon the private and select Schools, and the average attendance upon all the Schools, public and private, will then be 50,311. This will give us an aggregate average attendance upon all the Schools of all kinds, in the State, of 57 per cent., nearly, and thus an annual average absence from all Schools of all kinds of 43 per cent. of the children of the State.

Here is matter for serious consideration, worthy the attention of every good citizen. Until a change for the better can be effected, it will be

necessary in the future, as in the past, to urge this matter upon the general attention.

In the lowest view that can be taken of this subject, it is manifest that a very great pecuniary loss results from this irregularity and non-attendance upon the Schools. By the organization of the State School System, it is intended to extend to every child in the State an opportunity for the acquisition of knowledge; and properly carried out, the system does, through the Common Schools, make ample and adequate provision for the education of all to a certain extent. Whatever portion, then, of the children, for whom adequate provision is thus made, neglect or refuse to avail themselves of the opportunities granted to them, they by such neglect, entail a proportionate waste or loss of all the pecuniary expense of sustaining the Schools. It is idle to suppose that the attempt will ever hereafter be made to sustain a republican commonwealth without a provision, through public Schools, for that general intelligence which is universally recognized as indispensable to the well-being of free institutions; no ignorant man even, ever dreams of such an absurdity. Public Schools must thus always exist as an important portion of the working machinery of republican governments—the necessary expense of supporting them will always be one of the burdens of citizenship, and from necessity the expense will always be large, and the burden heavy. Indeed, the tax for the support of Schools will always be one of the largest, if not the largest, which the citizen will be called to pay. Rigid economy and thrift should be expected and exhibited by all in the administration of our State School System.

Our Schools, as the statistics show, cost us over \$500,000, and thus it is apparent that the absence of 43 per cent. of the children of the State from the Schools, causing a proportionate waste, entails a loss of money nearly sufficient to defray the ordinary expense of the civil government of the State in each year.

This view of the pecuniary waste caused by the very great irregularity of attendance upon our schools, ought to address itself forcibly to a large class of our citizens who have been prone to look upon education and every thing pertaining to it, as matters that are to be considered solely or mainly in their social, moral and philanthropic aspects, and therefore as without the scope of the common sympathies and interests of busy, active, shrewd men, engaged in the transaction of affairs. It is difficult to see how this class of men can avoid the force with which this wasteful lack of economy in the appropriation of large sums of money, appeals to every tax-payer in the community.

The demonstrable wastefulness, to which we have been referring, is not the only, nor by any means the most important of the evils that come from the irregular attendance and non-attendance upon the Schools. Nothing has a more disorganizing effect upon a School than an habitual irregularity of attendance. It renders nugatory all efforts to enforce proper discipline, for all true and correct discipline aims directly at the successful inculcation of permanent habits of order, of attention, of

obedience and correct deportment; and of course the constant presence of the pupils is indispensable to any great degree of success in the effort to give, by proper training in the Schools, those habits upon which the value of citizenship so much depends.

The efficiency of the Schools in developing the intellectual capacity of the children, is very seriously impaired by irregularity of attendance, and thus it happens that all our Schools, lose continually a large percentage of their possible power, as promoters of intellectual culture, from a cause which is unnecessary and might be easily avoided.

How shall the cause of so many and so great evils be removed? is a practical question of great importance. Compulsory measures, if possible, are certainly not desirable, if other and sufficient means can be found.

The persistent presentation and representation of the statistics, which show the great extent of the evil complained of, seem capable of arresting the public attention, and ultimately so fastening it as to secure a progressive amelioration, if nothing more. The history of the gradual improvement of the Schools in other States where the same powerful instrumentality of public sentiment has been secured by the periodical presentation of statistics, sufficiently indicates the proper course to be pursued. The average attendance upon the public Schools in Massachusetts is reported for the last year at 76 per cent., and an inspection of her educational reports shows a very great improvement to have steadily progressed from the time of the publication of annual reports of the statistics of her Schools.

The prevalent indifference in this State to this very important matter might find a very effective reproof in the fact that some of the large cities in our country have, by constant and vigorous efforts and persistent discussion secured a regularity and constancy of attendance upon their Schools, that to us seems almost miraculous. In some of the Western cities 90, 91 and even 92 per cent. has been reached as the average attendance upon the Schools for a year together. Our own average appears sufficiently small and mean by comparison, from very shame, to arouse us to more determined efforts.

Surely all who love the State, all who are looking hopefully to her future, should be effectually aroused, and all should combine to search out the causes, and discover and apply the remedies. A leading cause of this scanty attendance upon the Schools, provided at so great expense for all, is the fact that, until the recent adoption of a statistical system, no means existed by which any accuracy of knowledge whatever could be attained; no one supposed it possible that the attendance could be so small. If interrogated in regard to this point now, scarcely a man, judging solely by his own impressions, would estimate the average attendance of scholars as less than 65 or 70 per cent. It is to be hoped, and may reasonably be expected that, gradually, the yearly presentation of statistics, will do a

good work in fastening general attention upon the matter, and thus excite that wide and earnest discussion which alone can enable us to show a better record.

Another reason for the toleration of so open and general a disregard and neglect of opportunities so invaluable by the growing men and women of the State, is to be found in the fact before referred to, that the care of the educational interests of the community has, in former times been considered by the active men in business and in politics, to be rather beneath their attention, or without the scope of their accustomed sphere. Public agitation and the placing, by recent enactment, of the whole burden of the support of Schools upon the property of the State, will do much to counteract the effect of this cause. But this agitation should be vastly more general than heretofore, to be of much service. The efforts of the teachers, and local and general officials alone do but little in awakening general attention. We need the co-working of the press and the pulpit to a much greater degree than it has ever been given. Both of these agencies have done a great deal, but the vastness of the work remaining, requires very much more of the same work, in order to effect rapid progress.

Another reason, that may account for the small average attendance upon the Common Schools is, that our laws give no encouragement directly or indirectly to attendance, and impose no penalties or even disabilities upon non-attendance; and the result is, that while the safety and necessity of the community are made the grounds of compelling every property-holder to contribute pro-rata to the support of Schools that are intended and supposed to be adequate to give all necessary instruction to the children of the whole State, there is no corresponding obligation imposed upon citizens to avail themselves of the opportunities thus offered. Other States have already endeavored, by proper legislation, to set the whole matter right. In the Constitution of the State of Massachusetts, as recently revised, it is provided that:—

ART. 20.—No person shall have the right to vote, or be eligible to office under the Constitution of this Commonwealth, who shall not be able to read the Constitution in the English language, and write his name; provided however, that the provisions of this amendment shall not apply to any person prevented by a physical disability from complying with its requisitions, nor to any person who now has the right to vote, nor to any person who shall be sixty years of age or upwards at the time this amendment shall take effect.

And in the General Statutes of the same State, are found the following provisions:

CHAP. 41.—SEC. 1.—Every person having under his control a child between the ages of eight and fourteen years, shall annually during the continuance of his control send such child to some public school

in the city or town in which he resides, at least twelve weeks, if the public schools of such city or town so long continue, six weeks of which time shall be consecutive; and for any neglect of such duty the party offending shall forfeit to the use of such city or town a sum not exceeding twenty dollars; but if it appears, upon the inquiry of the truant-officers or School Committee of any city or town, or upon the trial of any prosecution, that the party so neglecting was not able, by reason of poverty to send such child to school, or to furnish him with the means of education, or that such child has been otherwise furnished with the means of education for a like period of time, or has already acquired the branches of learning taught in the public schools, or that his bodily or mental condition has been such as to prevent his attendance at school or application to study for the period required, the penalty before mentioned shall not be incurred.

CHAP. 42.—SEC. 4.—Each city or town may make all needful provisions and arrangements concerning habitual truants, and children not attending school, or without any regular lawful occupation, or growing up in ignorance, between the ages of five and sixteen years; and also all such by-laws respecting children as shall be deemed most conducive to their welfare and the good order of such city or town; and there shall be annexed to such by-laws suitable penalties, not exceeding twenty dollars, for any one breach; provided that such by-laws shall be approved by the Superior Court of the County.

SEC. 5.—The several cities and towns availing themselves of the provisions of the preceding section, shall appoint at the annual meetings of such town, or annually by the mayor or aldermen of such cities, three or more persons who alone shall be authorized, in case of violation of such by-laws, to make the complaint and carry into execution the judgments thereon.

SEC. 6.—A minor convicted under such a law, of being an habitual truant, or of not attending School, or of being without regular and lawful occupation, or growing up in ignorance, may, at the discretion of the Justice or Court having jurisdiction of the case, instead of the fine mentioned in section 4, be committed to any such institution of instruction, house of reformation, or suitable situation provided for the purpose under authority of section 4, for such time, not exceeding two years, as such Justice or Court may determine.

These laws are certainly very suggestive; and both equity and safety demand that the question of the right and duty of the State to provide by requisite legislation for securing to the Commonwealth the full benefit of her system of public Schools should be deliberately considered and solved.

The subject is delicate and difficult as it is important; but it may be doubted whether both the delicacy and the difficulty do not arise

from a prevalent and mistaken theory of the nature of the Public School System, which lacks truth, and of course soundness. It is frequently said that "such is the independence and self-assertion of the republican citizen, that you cannot compel him to accept even an acknowledged benefit, until he both desires and seeks it." Now such language, and all similar propositions, are based upon the hypothesis, that the Common School System of a republican State is an ingenious contrivance to compel the property of a State to contribute to the support of a common school system, whose benefits are to be available to the children of those who have little or no property, as an act of kindness or charity to the poorer classes. And hence it is said the plan is a good one—its intent is instinct with kindness; but when you have offered the benefaction, you cannot compel him, whom you would benefit, to receive it unless he is willing. Such reasoning is perhaps well enough, if it be admitted that the underlying basis of a Public School System is simple kindness or charity, as might possibly be alleged of a State system of poor laws; which apparently must rest on the moral and social obligation of society to relieve individuals from actual want and consequent sufferings, by extending to them the charity and kindness of the community.

But in reality such is not at all the character of the logical basis of a State school system under republican institutions. Such a system must stand, and cannot stand otherwise, on the inevitable necessities of a democratic form of government. In monarchies, oligarchies or despotisms, the humbler and poorer classes, not having any actual share in the control or direction of the government, may or may not be allowed to partake of the benefits of a State system of schools, established by the richer and abler classes; and in either case the logical basis of the government, that it exists for the benefit of a class or classes, is not at all disturbed.

But under democratic institutions the rule is precisely the opposite. The logical and actual basis of democratic government is that all power is in the whole people, to be exercised by the whole people and for the benefit of the whole people. Thus each individual citizen is assumed to be of right a co-equal and co-ordinate legislator, theoretically, in proportion to the freedom of the elective franchise—equally responsible for, because he equally contributes to the construction of the character of the government and its laws.

Thus, then, as the existence, the improvement and the stability of a government—by the whole people, depends absolutely upon the aggregate of the intelligence and integrity of each individual of the whole people, it follows that, under republican institutions, public schools are inaugurated and supported, not at all as a matter of charity or kindness, but as imperatively demanded by inevitable necessity, and as indispensable to the safety of the government and the protection of life and property under it.

There is not a jot more of charity or kindness wrought into the

logical basis of a State system of education than there is in the foundation of a State system of penal laws. However paradoxical it may seem, there is just as much of intrinsic charity in hanging a man who has committed murder as there is in giving the boy such culture while young, as will lead him when a man to avoid all transgression of all righteous laws.

If such reasoning is sound; and it seems to be irrefragible—then intelligence and integrity are indispensable to republican safety and growth, and, of course, ignorance and immorality are dangerous. If then, on the one hand we compel the property of the State under penal forfeitures, to support schools which tend to secure the intellectual and moral culture that are absolutely necessary to political and social safety; on the other hand, are not the community, who have thus compulsorily established and sustained agencies to secure the mental and moral culture of all, equally bound to compel, in some way, that general participation in the benefits thus proffered, which shall drive from it that ignorance and immorality which alone can make and do make possible that demagogism which is the ever-present danger of republics? Had the New England privileges of church and school, been equally available to all the people of the United States, the late terrible Rebellion would have been impossible.

In the light of such reasoning, the question has often presented itself, and it will continue to come again and again, and will demand an answer; whether the State of Vermont can safely tolerate forever, an average absence from school of one-half of the children within her borders.

And it will year after year remain the duty of your official agent, in the annual report, to continue annually to urge this most important subject upon the attention of the Legislature and the People, till some practical measures are inaugurated that give promise of amendment. What must be the character of any such measures of relief is a practical question, the solution of which will require great judgment and caution. The extracts from the laws of Massachusetts exhibit one method of solution, and it is perhaps the best practical solution, now in actual use. The Constitution excludes from participation in the right of suffrage, those who willfully remain in ignorance; and its laws give power to each town to declare truancy to be an evil full of danger, and to punish it as such. Certainly, these methods are well worthy of deliberate consideration.

It is worthy of thought, likewise, whether as the Common Schools are free to all, it might not be practicable to empower the Prudential Committees, on application to furnish all the necessary books to those children who are unable from poverty to provide themselves, at the expense of the district, and then as all means, at least of elementary culture, will be gratuitously provided for all, assess an annual tax of one dollar for the support of schools in each district,

upon each child within certain ages, from which tax they shall be relieved on presenting a certificate of attendance upon the schools for a given number of months.

NUMBER OF DISTRICTS.

The number of Districts, whole and fractional, in the State, as reported in the statistics, is 2,623. It has for years been apparent to any thoughtful observer of that prevalent habit of dividing and sub-dividing School Districts, upon slight cause, or for no valid reason whatever, by the action of towns in town meeting, has long been a prolific source of difficulty and embarrassment to the schools. Division and sub-division have so increased the number of the districts, and diminished their size territorially, and their strength numerically and financially, that mean school houses, short terms of school, and cheap and incompetent teachers have resulted almost of necessity. The extent to which the organic force of the district organization has thus been weakened is not appreciated by the great bulk of our citizens, if it were, remedies that would be effectual would soon be provided.

If we consider together the territorial extent of the State, and the number of Districts, we shall find the Districts of much less size than is commonly supposed. The area of the State is 9,056 square miles. The number of Districts in the State is, consisting whole and fractional, 2,623. These data, considering the whole extent of the State as being in a condition to require schools to be uniformly distributed over its whole surface—would give a territorial extent to each District of 3 41-100 miles square.

But the improved land in the State may be stated approximately at 2,850,000 acres, and the wild land at 1,300,000 acres. Then deducting the wild land from the whole extent, we shall find of the improved land, about 2 31-100 square miles in each District, giving a territory of a little more than 1½ miles square. It is apparent from this computation, that the Districts have in many cases been, by the hasty actions of the towns, reduced in size much more than can be demanded by any topographical necessity, and that as a necessary result the Districts are made proportionately weak.

Again, looking at this matter in another connection, we find in the State 88,362 children of school age, which divided by 2,623, the whole number of Districts, will give to each District an average number of 41 scholars, and an average attendance upon the schools of 21. Then taking into consideration the well known fact that the Districts in all the considerable villages, have a very much larger number of scholars, reaching from 70 to 300, we shall find that a great many of the rural districts cannot have an average number of children of school age, larger than about 20, with an average attendance upon the school of from eight to twelve.

The Grand List of the State stands at \$1,075,437, and this divided by the whole number of Districts, 2,623, will give \$410, as the average Grand List of each District. But here as before with reference to the scholars, making allowance for the aggregation of a larger proportion of the property which is the basis of the Grand List about the more densely populated Districts, we shall find very many Districts with a Grand List of \$200, or even less.

The inevitable deductions from such facts tend to make probable, the results which a familiar acquaintance with the schools shows to be certain, and hundreds, to say the least, of schools in the State are feeble and inefficient, and sometimes worse than merely useless, because the Districts are so small and weak that the schools cannot possibly be other than weak.

As towns in their municipal capacity have exclusive and supreme control over all matters appertaining to the division of territory into Districts, and alone can make any changes in their limits; the direct remedy for the many evils that grow out of a too minute subdivision of territory, of course, is naturally to be found in a change of habit on the part of the towns, and in a disposition to correct the evils of the past, by a re-districting of towns and an enlargement of the size with a diminution of the number of Districts. But towns have for a long time shown themselves to be exceedingly averse to such a positive and radical movement by direct steps. So much so that any extensive change for the better must be expected from some equivalent indirect movement. It is possible, however, and indeed practicable, perhaps, to attain the desired results alluded to, and, at the same time to secure the alleviation of evils coming from other sources, by a more general adoption of the system of graded schools, which, in order to any hope of success will require a previous increase of the strength of District organizations, to be secured by consolidation, or union of different Districts.

And indeed the rapidly increasing tendency throughout the State towards the establishment and support of Graded Schools, is the most decided indication of healthy educational progress.

A desire has been frequently exhibited, of late years, not only to secure better instruction in the branches, required by law to be taught in every Public School, but also to attain thorough instruction in other and higher branches. And this desire for instruction in higher English studies, so-called, particularly, has been a leading inducement to the establishment of Graded Schools whenever this policy has prevailed. It has also exhibited itself in efforts to obtain legislative sanction for the establishment of Town High Schools, which have now for several consecutive years occupied the attention of the General Assembly, but so far without success.

Many towns, within the past five years, have desired to obtain the better educational privileges that would grow out of Graded Schools,

through a complete consolidation of all their Districts; and have only failed, after obtaining a vote, or a certainty of a vote for consolidation, from the difficulty of dealing with the practical question of equally distributing the existing school property. The language of the statute is as follows: "When the inhabitants of any town cannot be conveniently accommodated in one School District, it shall be the duty of such town at a legal meeting, notified for that purpose, to divide such town into as many School Districts as shall be judged most convenient; to define and determine their limits, and from time to time, to divide such as are too large, unite such as are too small, or otherwise to alter them and make new Districts, as shall be found expedient."

It is plain from this language that the exclusive power of "determining the limits" of Districts from time to time, involves the contingent right of consolidation, and, as it would seem, also of necessity, the right of distributing fairly the property of the Districts so consolidated. There is no direction whatever in the law in regard to this matter, and the absence of such direction seems to refer the matter to the good sense and discretion of the town. Upon being consulted in regard to the proper course to be pursued in a town that had by vote determined to consolidate all its Districts, during the last school year, I recommended the adoption by the town of the following resolutions:

Resolved, I. That all previous action of the town of ——— in reference to the division of the territory of said town into School Districts is hereby reconsidered; and all such division of said territory of said town into School Districts is hereby amended.

II. That the entire territory of said town of ——— is hereby embraced within, and shall hereafter constitute a single School District, to be called and known by the name of "the consolidated school district of ——— No. 1."

III. That a Committee of three disinterested residents of other towns, consisting of A of ———, B of ———, and C of ———, is hereby appointed, who shall, as soon as may be, appraise, at its present cash value, all of the school property of each of the various Districts now existing in town, and make a record of such appraisal, and cause such record to be recorded in the town clerk's office of said town; and the Selectmen of said town are directed to notify said Committee of their said appointment, and to draw orders on the Treasurer of said town for the reasonable compensation of the services of such Committee. And all such school property, thus appraised, shall become the property of said town of ———, upon the completion of the record of such appraisal in the Town Clerk's office of said town.

IV. That each tax-payer of said several school districts shall, by

the Listers of said town, be credited for a share of the value, as appraised as aforesaid, of the school property of his District in proportion to his Grand List at the time of such appraisal, and such said proportionate share of each tax-payer shall be deducted from the amount of his liability upon any taxes that may thereafter be raised by said town for the purchase of land, or the erection or repair of buildings for school purposes.

My own view at the time was, that under the general law giving supreme control of all territorial relations of school districts, the power to regulate the disposal and distribution of district property pertained to the town as an inevitable inference, and therefore that the town was competent to pass, by resolutions like those quoted, upon such questions. But I esteem the general adoption of the graded school system of so much importance, that, in order to remove any obstacle, whether real or fancied, that may grow out of a doubt of the legal power of towns to take such action, I venture to recommend that you use your influence to procure the passage by the next Legislature of a general enabling act by which towns shall be empowered, in cases of general or partial consolidation of districts, to make valid distribution of District property.

NUMBER OF CLASSES.

No practical teacher can closely observe the methods in use in the practical conduct of the Public Schools, without becoming convinced that the power for good and rapid results of the schools is greatly impaired by certain prevalent customs, to which the public attention has never yet been sufficiently directed. All teachers, and all other intelligent observers, will agree that in each and every branch taught in the school, the recitation of the class or the scholar always must furnish the best attainable test of the skill and capacity of the teacher, as well of the ability and success of the class. The recitation is at once the culmination and the criterion of the work of both teacher and taught; if it be accurate, ready, and complete, then the just conclusion is that real progress is made; but if otherwise, there can be no reliable indication of advancement.

It is through the recitation alone, that the teacher can ascertain the deficiencies of the pupils, and then alone can by question, suggestion, correction and review supply those deficiencies or fitly enable the pupil so to do. Hasty and careless recitations, not only do no good, but they are infinitely worse than no recitations; for they delude and mislead classes and pupils; they permit them to acquire and retain false and erroneous ideas and conceptions, or to pass over topic after topic so hastily and crudely that error or superficiality are the certain results. Again the effort to express one's ideas in regard to any topic of thought or study, is an indispensable means of certain knowledge in reference to it; the possibility of the existence of knowledge with no ability to express it in words, is more than dubious.

On this account, in every stage of the pupil's progress, and in regard to every topic of study, the recitation is, and always must be, of paramount importance; it must be deliberate, keen and searching, or it is good for less than nothing. But such a recitation must have time as well as thought and labor.

If these views are correct, actual observation of the schools as practically conducted will soon reveal abundant cause for that shallow and insufficient mastery of the various matters brought to the attention of classes which is noticeable in Public Schools of every grade. In the absence of any strong and intelligent public sentiment upon the subject, the almost universal custom of teachers is to comply with the habitual demand of every parent, that his children must recite once in each half day in every branch of study to which they give their time and attention; and the result is the formation of so many classes that it becomes utterly impossible for any of the teacher's or the pupil's work to be well and thoroughly done. Persuaded of the importance of this matter, I inserted in the Registers of last year an inquiry as to the number of classes in each school, and the average number is eighteen.

The usual half-day session of the school lasts from nine till twelve, or from one till four, giving three hours of time, which is one hundred and eighty minutes; from this take thirty minutes for time lost in entering school, and in the recesses, and allowing three-quarters of an hour for the manifold duties of the teacher in giving assistance in a thousand ways to individuals, as is the universal custom in ungraded schools, and there remain one hundred and five minutes for recitation, which will give a little less than six minutes to each of the average number of eighteen classes. It is perfectly patent then that here is cause enough for an indefinite amount of inefficiency in teaching and sluggishness in acquisition. That with an average attendance upon the school of five to eight years, our boys and girls leave the school, inelegant readers, slow and inaccurate accountants, and with little power of expression, either oral or written, in their own language, and scarcely more of appreciation; and in profound ignorance of the history and constitution of their own country, is lamentable enough and is disgraceful enough; but it is not inexplicable, in view of eighteen class recitations in each half day, to any one who is a teacher, or who knows what is indispensably requisite to thorough and efficient teaching.

This matter needs the immediate and interested attention of all who wish well to our schools; and an aroused public sentiment should demand the immediate application of the only effectual remedy, which is a decided diminution of the number of regular class recitations in the day. Parents, through a wide discussion of the matter, would be made to see that one real, strong, thorough recitation is better for their children than an indefinite number of careless, slipshod, and superficial ones. And, perhaps more than anything else, the teachers

should be led to see that duty to the children, as well as their own sense of right and justice to all, and even common honesty, all concur in demanding such limitation of the number of class recitations, as shall make it possible for each to be of some possible value. I am aware that many, of course, will say "there are so many classes, and "they must be heard in recitation once in each half day or the parents "will be dissatisfied." To this the reply may well be made, that the first duty of each teacher is to do well whatever he undertakes to do, in the light of his own conscience, and to some extent irrespective of consequences,—that while at first, perhaps, some dissatisfaction may arise from a diminution of the number of daily recitations, yet, in the end, this course will surely vindicate itself in the better advancement of the pupils; and finally that while it is the parent's privilege to say, within the limits of the law, what his children shall study, there his right ceases; it is the right and the duty of the teacher to say how the pupil shall pursue the studies selected by his parent.

When the number of classes in any school is so great that justice cannot be done to all in a half daily recitation, it is not only the legal right of the teacher, but it is his solemn duty to lessen the number of recitations to one in each day, or one in each two days, if necessary, until he can compass time enough for each class exercise to make it a living, actual, and useful thing.

BOARDING AROUND.

It appears from the statistics that a large proportion of the teachers, during the last year, notwithstanding the recent enactment by which it is provided that "all expenses incurred by School Districts for the "support of Schools, shall be defrayed by a tax upon the Grand List of "such District" have been compelled to board around. The whole number of teachers employed were 4,722, and of these 1,525 boarded around. In other words, by the connivance of intelligent citizens, and through the deliberate action of their organized school meeting, nearly one-third of all the teachers employed in the Public Schools to teach growing citizens their duties under the law of the State, have been compelled to disobey a well-known law of recent enactment. The number thus boarding around in the previous year was 1,492, showing a small increase during the last year, which indicates a strong probability, either through a repeal of the law forbidding the practice, or in spite of all law, of returning to the old custom of levying a portion of the expenses of the school upon the scholars attending school.

The matter is one of the greatest practical importance to the well-being of the Schools, and while the present tendency is apparent cannot well be omitted in the Annual Report, however much of previous discussion it may have received, for a return to the former quite general practice of boarding the teacher around "upon the scholar" would be one of the most serious misfortunes that could possibly befall our School system.

And as I am unable to present the matter more forcibly than I have done it before, I ask, again, attention to the argument that has heretofore been used.

It is impossible to mistake the import or the intent of the law. It was intended to put a final stop to the sending of teachers about the district for their board, like so many travelling medics. But, as is shown by the returns, the law, if not disobeyed, is in some way evaded, for more than one-third of all the teachers employed during the year, were boarded in direct defiance of the law.

This matter is one of importance to all, and although it has often been discussed in the Reports, and presented in various lights, there will still remain a necessity for recurring to it while the practice survives to as great an extent as is shown at present. Adapting then the reasoning heretofore urged, to the statistical returns of the present year, I once more ask attention to the effects of a practice which every experienced friend of the schools condemns. Few movements in the educational field would be productive of more, or more immediate benefit to the schools, than the entire abolition of the habit of boarding around. But, the law being already right, the practice will continue, till a persistent agitation shall come to the support of the law, and result in a change of public sentiment that shall enforce the execution of the law. The arguments that have been before presented in the Report are equally applicable now.

This matter of boarding around has been habitually discussed with such exclusive reference to statements and arguments of the narrowest character and most limited scope, that the real merits of the discussion are to many entirely unknown; and the variety and evil influences of the prevalence of the practice are so great, that no excuse can be thought necessary for alluding to the subject, so long as it may prevail to any extent worthy of notice. It is claimed by those who favor the practice of boarding around in proportion to the attendance upon the school that, in the first place, by this practice an excellent opportunity is afforded the teacher to become familiarly acquainted with the parents and children of the district, and to "learn human nature"; and as these acquirements are indispensable to the teacher, therefore the teacher should board around.

In reply to this, it might be said, in the first place, admitting the necessity of an intimate acquaintance on the part of the teacher with the characters of the pupils, their parents and the citizens generally, it is not at all certain that this necessary acquaintance would be promoted by boarding a short portion of time in each family in the district.

Another reply is that, admitting the convenience of this general and particular acquaintance to the teacher, in order to enable him fully to discharge his various duties, it is no more true of the teacher than it is of the physician or of the preacher. He who cares for the bodies or the souls of men requires fully as much to know accurately all their various traits and characteristics, mental, moral or corporal, as does

he who is to care for the improvement of their minds. But the entire absurdity of the practice could never be made more apparent than by an application to the doctor and the preacher of the same practice which is thus held to be not only rational, but decidedly expedient as applied to the teacher. Suppose the application be made. The teacher, because an intimate knowledge of the various characteristic traits of character of his pupils and their parents would facilitate his efforts and give them greater effect, it is claimed, should board around among the different families; and, some measure of time being indispensable to arrange the matter of board equitably and satisfactorily, he ought to board in the different families in proportion to the number of children that attend the school, i. e., in proportion to the existing necessity in each family, for his professional assistance. Apply the same rule to the doctor; and because the judicious and effectual application to the cure of disease of the necessary and appropriate remedies, requires an intimate acquaintance with the various elements of character, moral, mental or physical, of his patients, therefore the physician should board around; and, fixing the existing necessity for his services as the standard of time, as in the case of the teacher, the doctor should board around in proportion to the prevalence and virulence of Diphtheria and Scarlet Fever. And, as the rule is to the fullest extent equally applicable to the teacher of morals and religion, then the preacher should board around in proportion to the prevalent wickedness and disregard of all moral right. Such an application of the principles claimed smothers them in absurdity.

It is said, in the second place, that it will be far less burdensome for many families to pay such portion of the expense of the Schools as accrues from boarding the teacher, in actually boarding the teacher for the proper proportionate time, than it would be to pay it in money.

Whatever force there may be in this reasoning—and that there is some force in it is not denied—it is believed to be more than counterbalanced by facts and arguments that might be urged on the other side.

In the first place, the only logical basis upon which, in any republican State, a State system of public Schools can find a stable and permanent foundation, consists in the necessity of general intelligence and virtue, in order to the security of life and property, wherever, from the nature of the government, universal suffrage, endows every individual with the character of a law-maker.

Good laws, general orderliness and peace give security to property and to life. A general diffusion of knowledge and uprightness give possibility and existence to good laws, general orderliness and peace. A general public system of Schools, extending the benefits of mental and moral culture to all, can alone secure a general diffusion of knowledge and uprightness. Therefore, a public system of free Schools is indispensable in every republican State, and it is to be considered a

matter of necessity and self-protection that cannot be dispensed with. Therefore all of the property of the State, of every description, should ratably contribute to defray all the expenses of a system of public Schools, without which, security to property is hopeless, and indeed impossible. By any logical and reasonable theory of republicanism, then, all the expenses of the public Schools should be defrayed by a tax upon the Grand List; or, in other words, upon the property of the community. And so, any attempt to distribute the expense of the board of the teacher, or of any other item of the expense of sustaining the public Schools in proportion to the scholars that may attend the School, is in direct contravention of all the theoretical principles of democratic institutions.

As a matter of practical experiment, too, the statistics furnish reason to believe that the apportionment of the expense of boarding the teacher, and of fuel, upon the scholars who may attend the school, has operated most disastrously for the State.

The State System of Public Schools must, as a matter of theory, be supposed to be adequate for the purpose for which it was designed—in other words, adequate to give the necessary culture to the 88,362 children reported as of school age. And for this agency, thus theoretically sufficient for the accomplishment of its work, the people annually pay \$500,000. And this vast sum is paid, not as a matter of ornamental or philanthropic policy, but as a matter of stern necessity. The State needs that all her 88,362 children should be instructed as a matter of indispensable self-protection. Whatever, then, stands in the way of, or prevents the accomplishment by the schools of their appropriate and allotted work, is prejudicial to the highest interests of the State.

Now a glance at the statistics shows us that some agency or power does stand in the way of the accomplishment by the schools of their proper work. The statistics show that while the whole number of the children of the State of school age, between 4 and 18 years of age, is 88,362; of all these children only 71,939 have attended School at all. This gives 16,428, or 18 per cent. of the whole, that during the past year have not attended school at all. And looking a little farther, we find that the average attendance upon the Schools of those between the ages of 4 and 20 has been 46,245, and if from this we take the probable average attendance of pupils between 18 and 20 years, which is 1,481, we shall have the average attendance upon the schools of the children between 4 and 18 years to be 44,764, which is 50 per cent. or one-half. But if a system of Schools, organically sufficient for the education of 88,362 within certain limits, cost \$500,000, and yet while sufficient to teach all, is so operated and under such circumstances as to educate only 50 per cent., or one-half of the children for whom it is intended and is adequate; then, if figures prove any thing, these figures prove that one-half of the State expenditures for Schools, or \$250,000, is lost.

It is a little strange that, among a sharp and shrewd people, a greater effort has not been hitherto made to discover the cause or causes of so great wastefulness. What, then, are the leading causes of an average absence from the public Schools of more than half of the children of the State, for whose instruction they were organized.

Perhaps a slight inspection of the statistics, together with certain known facts respecting the practical operation of the School System, will help us to give a reasonable and probable answer to this question.

Allowing that an average district pursues the course generally practiced, and figuring expenses in accordance with the discoveries of the statistics, the following nearly will be the result.

At the annual meeting the plan will be proposed and accepted of sustaining a two months' summer school upon the Grand List, then putting the board and fuel for the whole year upon the scholar, and then to sustain as many more weeks of school as will suffice to exhaust the public money. According to this plan, the expenses will be nearly as follows: upon the property will be paid the expense of two months summer school taught by a woman because it will be less expensive. Two months school by a female teacher, at the statistical average price \$12.40 per month will cost \$24.80. It being summer there will be no expense for fuel. And as the board of the teacher and fuel are to be put upon the scholar, and only enough more school be taught to expend the public money, of which the average amount to each district is \$42.00, there will be nothing more in the way of expense to be paid upon the Grand List.

Upon the scholar will be levied taxes to pay the board of the teacher for the average term—22 weeks—at the average price ascertained by the year's statistics, of \$2.29 per week, amounting to \$50.38, and to pay the expense of fuel for the year which may be estimated at five cords, which, at \$3.50 per cord, will amount to \$17.50. In the supposed district, then, pursuing the ordinary course, and regulating the expenses entirely in accordance with the revelations of the statistics, the property of the district will pay \$24.80 and the children of the district attending school will pay the sum of \$67.88. When we call to mind the uniformity with which children seem to be distributed to the families everywhere in inverse proportion to their pecuniary ability, it will be apparent that the average amount of public money distributed, \$42.00, which is distributed mainly in proportion to the average attendance of the children, the major portion of whom come from the poorer families, the inequality and injustice of the practice of boarding around becomes very apparent. The statistics show the aggregate average number of children attending the schools to have been 46,245. This aggregate average attendance divided by the whole number of districts, gives 17 as the average daily attendance of each district. Now dividing the \$67.88, the average amount to be paid by each district upon the scholars attending the schools, by the average number,

17, attending school constantly, we have \$44,00, nearly, to be paid by each scholar attending.

Surely, when thus it is seen that under the practice of boarding around, by far the heaviest taxes necessary in the support of the school are levied upon the scholar, the property paying less than one-fourth, while the scholars pay three-fourths, there can be little doubt that one powerful agency in diminishing the attendance upon the schools is discovered.

But, it is said that "when a poor man is really unable to board the teacher, we pass him by and let him go." But what right has any man or set of men so to manage a system of republican institutions as to compel a citizen on account of poverty to accept, as a charity from his neighbors what belongs to him of right from the government, of which, though poor, he is a constituent part?

But other and stronger objections may well be urged against the boarding around practice. By the statistics we have discovered that more than four-fifths of the districts employ two teachers annually, and common observation shows that a very large proportion of these teachers are quite young and inexperienced. All teachers need daily study and exertion and thought in order to enable them to sustain the necessary interest in the various branches which they teach. This is of course especially true of younger teachers; and it may be said that the most prominent want of our schools is not so much a better class of teachers, as a better application of the latent capacity now possessed by the present teachers. But without study—daily study, and thought—the best powers of our teachers cannot be developed. Whatever then has a tendency to encourage and promote the habit of study and thought on the part of our teachers in the effort daily to increase their power and efficiency in giving instruction, operates directly and powerfully to the improvement of the school. But in order to the possibility of this thought and study on the part of the teacher he must have quiet retirement and opportunity for study. Herein is the especially mischievous tendency of the practice of boarding around, that it absolutely precludes the teacher from that daily study and effort, without which even an old teacher must constantly deteriorate, and without which a young teacher must fail; and in so doing strikes directly at the improvement of the schools.

It is also true that wherever the practice of putting the expense of board and fuel upon the scholar has prevailed, it has ever been a source of constant quarrel and discussion; for, diametrically opposed in principle to the general tenor and spirit of republican institutions, effort after effort will be made when occasion offers to substitute a more democratic and equitable custom, and the result has often been to keep the district in a constant strife and to embitter the feelings of citizens, and thus to diminish the good effect of the school.

The Legislature at a recent session most wisely enacted laws intended to put a final termination to this undemocratic and injurious cus-

tom; and while they remain in force, in spite of the efforts of ingenious men to avoid the effect of the law by cunning devices and exceeding shrewd tricks; and in spite of efforts already actively in operation to procure the repeal of the law; it is to be hoped not only that no repeal will ever be attained, but that additional legislation will so construe the laws already enacted that a practice which drives the children of the poor from the public schools,—which deprives the teachers of all opportunity for study and self-improvement; which creates an excessive inequality of taxation; which compels men, merely on account of poverty, to meekly receive as beggars the full enjoyment of valuable privileges that belong to them of right; which tends always to excite bitterness and a spirit of unrest and animosity, shall be forever eradicated. While we thank the good Father that with all its many burdens and sorrows, this terrible war has destroyed the venom and the power of the spirit of caste that for many long years has cursed one portion of our common country, let us pray that the same spirit may not find a refuge in the glens of the Green Mountains, and by levying taxes for the support of education “upon the scholar” seal forever the fountain of knowledge to the children of the poor and the needy.

APPARATUS.

The necessity, in order to a rapid and wholesome improvement in the prevalent methods of teaching the various branches to which attention is given in our schools, of an adequate provision of the various articles of apparatus, that are considered indispensable to good schools everywhere in the world except in Vermont, has been urged in these Annual Reports from year to year, but with little apparent success. In this particular our State stands alone. Her people are swift to provide themselves fully with all the mechanical means and appliances that human skill invents, for facilitating the accomplishment of results in every other department of labor; but in the field of educational labor, she is almost entirely destitute of all those conveniences and facilities in the way of school apparatus, that abound in the schools of any other State.

I append here an inventory of all the goods and chattels of our good Commonwealth that can come under the category of school apparatus, deeming the list itself more significant than any comment that can be made upon it. From the statistical summary it appears that for nearly 3,000 schools there are 130 dictionaries and books of reference; 223 Globes; 369 sets of Maps; 140 clocks, and 42 thermometers.

I venture to affirm that this inventory cannot be matched in any other State in the Union.

PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEES.

The Public Schools, for many years, have suffered in many and different ways from the brevity of the connection that has customarily subsisted between all the school officials that have practically to do with the management of school affairs, and the objects of their change. There is not a difficulty in the successful conduct of the schools that has not been enhanced by this cause, nor a capacity for good results that has not been crippled. It is rare to find a Town Superintendent, a District Clerk, or a Prudential Committee, that has remained more than two years in office; and the almost inevitable result has been, that the work appertaining to these offices has not been as well done as it might, under other circumstances, easily have been done.

In order that a Superintendent may thoroughly and well perform his various and important duties in the examination and selection of teachers, in giving wholesome advice in regard to the instruction and management of the schools, and in co-operating with the teacher in creating about the school an atmosphere that will foster all good and discourage all evil tendencies of the schools, it is evidently necessary that he must have a tolerable acquaintance with the best methods of performing his duties, and with the scholars and parents, with whom he is to come in contact; as well as with the circumstances that will attend the progress of the school.

But all these things require time, and hence a frequent shifting of Superintendents makes it impossible that the possible inherent power of the office or the real strength of the incumbent should ordinarily be developed. When a stranger enters upon the discharge of the duties of the office of Superintendent, and begins his examination of teachers, he will find many of the applicants young, inexperienced and poorly qualified to come up to any reasonable standard of qualification that in good conscience can be established. If he make the examination too easy and admit all, he will inflict irreparable injury upon some of his schools. If he make the examination rigid and exacting, and reject all that fall below his abstract standard, even if that be comparatively low, he will find himself short of teachers, and will create a general feeling of dissatisfaction that will destroy or seriously impair his usefulness.

If now the prevalent custom were to employ the same person, when competent, year after year, and to pay him enough to make it an object to do his duty faithfully, he could, at first, adopt a medium standard of qualification at his examination, then by advice and assistance administered kindly and judiciously, he could easily work up all his younger teachers to a good and still advancing standard of ability, and thus year by year continually improve the capacity of the teachers and the character of the schools. Seed time and harvest, in educational matters, do not come as near together

as in the cultivation of corn and turnips. The energetic and wise Superintendent must plant the germs of future improvement, and then tend and foster them for years before any one can reap a harvest worth the gathering. Superintendents who have for many years together advised their towns in regard to matters pertaining to their schools, can and do speak with a greater weight of authority and with far more influence, than can ever attend the efforts of a succession of new men.

But before this desirable extension of the tenure of this office can be generally secured, it will be necessary that there be excited by frequent discussion a better appreciation by the people generally of the importance of the office of Superintendent of Schools, and of the value of an energetic, and skilful, and judicious discharge of its duties.

And to this must be added a disposition on the part of the various communities to pay a more reasonable and just compensation than is now given for the labor of this office. Not only time and labor, but also skill, judgment and scholarship are requisite to the right discharge of the duties of the office; and there is no reason why true economy, as well as justice, should not provide the same compensation for these high qualifications in the field of educational labor, that are bestowed upon them when employed in other directions. The legal compensation provided from the State Treasury, of one dollar per day,—which is about one-half the per diem of a smart, unskilled workman in common manual or mechanical labor,—is palpably insufficient to command the services of competent men as Superintendents for a prolonged term. But under a recent provision of law, towns are empowered to add, in their discretion, to the compensation given by the State, and this is probably as eligible an arrangement as can be hoped for at present, if, indeed, it is not the best that is possible.

But if, through discussion, the general attention can be sufficiently fixed upon the subject, we may hope that, ere long, towns will all see and follow the policy of electing their best men for consecutive years to the office of Superintendent, and then of paying as large a compensation for good work done for the public as they would reasonably expect to give for equally good work performed for any one of their citizens individually.

In the office of District Clerk, also, the employment of more skill, experience, and conscience, would be of great practical service to the cause of education. When it is considered that more than nine-tenths of all litigation in regard to school matters,—notoriously the most bitter, the most expensive, and the most injurious of all known litigation,—arises from improper and illegal warnings, records, and other documents, the inevitable result of electing inattentive, incompetent, and sometimes ignorant men to the office of District Clerk; little argument is necessary to convince reasonable and reasoning

men, that true policy would dictate the selection of first-rate men to this office, and their continuation in office for a series of years.

But all our public schools suffer more, and more directly from the carelessness and utter want of judgment so often displayed in the selection of improper men for the office of Prudential Committee, and the prevalent habit of changing those officers annually. It is as true of schools as of all other enterprises, that the first necessary condition of successfully operating them, is the adoption in their management of a well-considered, fixed and stable policy. It is the legal duty of the Prudential Committee to prepare and keep in order the school-house,—to provide fuel, furniture, and all things necessary for the convenience and advancement of the school,—to select and employ a proper person for teacher : to assist and advise him in regard to the direction and management of the school, and, in short, to do everything on the part of the District that is necessary to establish and sustain a good school. And most remarkable power is, by the law, given to this officer ; he has the most, and the most irresponsible power that, under the law of our State, is given to any man. He may employ and discharge whom he pleases ; and after he is once appointed, the District cannot interfere with his contracts, even through an unanimous vote.

Thus it happens, that almost of necessity, the animus, the character, and the success of the school, will always depend very largely, and in many cases entirely, upon the character of the Prudential Committee. If he is bold, and strong, and wise, and wisely liberal, then the school will flourish and do well its work, and every great interest of the community will be benefitted thereby. But if he is small, and time-serving, and niggardly, then will the hearts and souls, and minds of the children languish in starvation, or be stamped for time and eternity with inferiority, and be dwarfed and stunted into unnecessary stupidity.

An observation of the manner in which school elections are conducted would lead one to suppose an idea generally to prevail that the office of Prudential Committee was invented to be passed around from man to man in the community, and give each in turn an opportunity so to manage District matters for one year as most to conduce to his own convenience, and furnish a little opportune spending money to some family relative, and at the close of the year to give place to some other individual whose "turn" would then have arrived.

A very significant inquiry came to me during the past year, from another State, whether, in our State, we had any means of knowing the number of teachers employed in the public schools who were relatives of the Prudential Committee of their District. It would be well to insert a question in the next Registers that would elicit information in regard to this point.

The constant shifting of Prudential Committees from year to year precludes the possibility of conducting the schools upon any well settled and permanent plan ; occasions a continual disposition to change teachers, irrespective of their good or bad qualities, and in many ways is a most prolific source of all the evils and misfortunes that can or do befall our schools.

It is very much to be wished, that a change in our laws may give more of permanence to this office, and thus adding to its importance, concur with a more enlightened perception of the importance of its functions, in securing a better class of men as Prudential Committees, and through a more durable connection of their charge, afford them a much better opportunity of doing good service.

THE COMPENSATION PAID TO THE SECRETARY OF THE BOARD.

This is a topic which I should as heretofore, so in the future, diligently avoid, did I expect longer to remain Secretary of your Hon. Board. But, inasmuch as, under present circumstances, my official connection with the Board will probably close with the present year, I can not, in justice to the educational interests of the State, or to my successor, omit to call your attention and that of the Legislature to the subject indicated.

The law designating the duties of the Secretary is as follows:

"At the annual meeting said Board shall appoint a suitable and competent person to be the Secretary of said Board of Education, whose duties shall be: first, to keep a record of all the official doings of said Board ; second, to exert himself constantly and faithfully to promote the highest interests of Education in the State, by and with the advice of the Board of Education ; and to this end he shall hold annually, in connection with the Academies and Seminaries of the State, at least one Teachers' Institute in each county in the State, and not more than two in any one county, and said Institutes shall be holden at as central a point, in the several counties, as is practicable, during the fall and spring terms, of such schools. He shall during each year visit every part of the State, deliver lectures upon subjects pertaining to the interest of education, confer with Town Superintendents, and visit schools in connection with them, and furnish and distribute to them blank forms for collecting statistics of the various schools in the State. He shall prepare and present to the Board of Education, on the first day of their annual session, a report of his official doings, for the preceding year, and a statement of the condition of the common schools of the State ; of the expenditure of the school moneys therein ; and such suggestions for improving their organization and modes of instruction, together with such other information in regard to systems of school instruction in other states and countries, as he shall deem proper."

To these manifold duties, have been added by recent legislation the duties of visiting the Normal Schools, attending the examinations for admission and graduation, and of holding at each Teachers' Institute an examination of all who may apply for State certificates. In no other State are so many onerous duties heaped upon a single individual; in no other State is the whole burden so entirely cast upon the executive manager of the State School system.

For nine years after the organization of the Board of Education, the compensation of the Secretary was fixed by law at the sum of \$1000, in addition to which he received an appropriation of \$30 for the expenses of each Institute, and notwithstanding the immense enhancement of the cost of living, and the expenses of travelling, the compensation remained the same through the war, until in 1865, legal provision was made to pay the travelling expenses of the Secretary, and there the matter rests.

With an annual expenditure for schools of \$500,000, with a minor population of nearly, 100,000, dependent in eight cases out of nine, upon the public schools for whatever culture, mental or moral, they may ever receive, it is evident that a right performance of the varied duties of the Secretary of the Board of Education, under whose general supervision all of the public schools must come, is a matter of the highest moral, social and pecuniary importance, to every individual, both as a tax payer and a man.

The right performance of all these important duties, furnishes scope for the full exercise of the highest abilities attainable, both executive, literary and moral. While the present educational organization remains in force, no living man in the State has so vast an opportunity for good or for evil as the Secretary of the Board of Education.

The right use of these opportunities for the highest good, moral, economical and social of the State, will demand the whole time and ability of whoever may occupy this position, and he should be so situated that every moment of his time, every shred of such power as he may be able to command, should be given up to his glorious, but terribly responsible work. But in order to do this, he must not be expected to earn his bread and sustain his family by his personal exertions, and perform his official duties at the same time.

If the original salary of \$1000 had been sufficient when the Board organized, it is not so now, and ought to be increased. The man who at any time may hold the office, will find it indispensable to his success that he may be from time to time thoroughly informed of whatever improvements are being introduced elsewhere. Books, papers, periodicals, educational works without number will all be necessary to him; his business if he has any must be given up or neglected: his expenses on every hand will be increased; and with the present salary, he cannot sustain himself without a mean

and niggardly economy that ought not to be exacted from him. True policy will always require that the connection between the Secretary and the schools should be a permanent one, for the full strength of any man in such a position cannot be developed at once. However great may be any man's strength, he will fail measurably of results till he has secured the acquaintance of the people of the State, and their confidence; and will find, as Lord Mansfield once said, that "confidence is a plant of slow growth." But in order to command the best strength of a competent man, he must at least be relieved from anxiety concerning the current expenses of his family.

The prospect of retiring from so great labor, and of such responsibility, after the loss of the best years of life, with shattered strength, broken health and an exhausted exchequer will not be particularly alluring to the kind of men that are needed in the office in question.

At the time of the organization of the Board, everything that was done was regarded as experimental in its character; everybody felt as though groping in the dark, looking for the right way. But now everything is different, and I venture to ask your attention to some glimpses of the early history of the proceedings of the Board to elucidate the propositions in reference to the necessity and propriety of an increase of the compensation of your future Secretary.

In the fall of 1856, the Board of Education, through President Pease, tendered me the appointment of Secretary, with a requisition that all other business be abandoned. Taken entirely by surprise, for I not only had made no application, but I did not know that such an appointment was to be made; I replied immediately that I could not stay at home and support my family on \$1,000 per year, and declined positively, with the remark, that I did not think any competent man would accept under such conditions. In January, 1857, I was invited to attend a meeting of the Board at Windsor and was there elected Secretary without being required to give up all other business. Taking time to reflect, and suggesting that I might be permitted to see a schedule of the necessary annual work to be prepared by the Board, I made a written proposition to the Board which was accepted and ordered recorded, and will be found among your Records in the following words.

To the Hon. Board of Education of Vermont:

WINDSOR, January 15, 1857.

That in a matter of so great importance, there may be no possible misunderstanding, allow me to make my proposition in writing, as to the Secretaryship.

I propose, if appointed, to do the amount of labor, as contained in Mr. Slade's schedule, as the minimum prescribed by the law, to

make the matter a constant object of thought and action, and identify myself actively with the great object ; but not to be compelled to so far make this my exclusive business as to force me to resign the clerkship I hold. I will *do the labor* but not give *all* my time. And seeing no necessity for any one man's losing his labor in an enterprise *because* it is *greatly* good, and if successful will promote the *material* as well as moral and intellectual good of the whole people ; I shall expect as a compensation, a certificate from the Governor that I am entitled to \$1,000, as the years' salary, and such other sum as I shall in good faith and actually expend in holding the Institutes in each county, as prescribed by law.

After long reflection and thought, I can see the labor of the first year in no other light than as being far more arduous and perplexing than that of any succeeding year can be. Should this proposition be acceptable, I shall take the appointment, deeply impressed in the importance and responsibility of the post.

Should the proposition, though the best I feel at liberty to make, be unacceptable, I shall, in spite of my own deep interest in the cause, feel it as a relief.

Should some person be found to accept the place on more reasonable terms, I pledge him any assistance I can give in advance.

Should the board, all things considered, deem it best not to make an appointment this year, I tender my promise to perform gratuitously any amount of labor, to promote the great object, that shall not occupy more than one month's time, as an earnest of the real interest I feel.

If the proposition be accepted I am to receive in writing the *skeleton* or General Plan of the Board, sketching the outline of their aims and purposes, and the general mode of procedure.

Respectfully and in haste,

J. S. ADAMS.

Permit another quotation from the records, " At the annual meeting of the Board held on the 13th of October, A. D. 1857, upon examination of the account of the Secretary, the expenditures for Institutes were found to have exceeded the \$30 appropriation for each Institute, as provided in the law.

It was deemed best to confine the allowance of the Secretary's account strictly within the limits of the law organizing the Board, even although the expenditures actually made should exceed that sum, and allow simply \$30, for each Institute."

Then it will be seen that the expenses of the Institutes during the first year actually exceeded the appropriations, and not only so, but it appeared from the accounts of the Secretary that he had expended in the first year in cash, more money than he received from the State, thus paying something for the privilege of doing the work of the State.

It is true this did not occur again ; but it is true, that for the first nine years, or until the travelling expenses of the Secretary were assumed by the State in 1865, the actual sum, over and above expenses, received by the Secretary, did not average \$350, annually, as I verily believe, counting in the expense for clerk hire, made indispensable by the amount of the labor.

I beg you to believe that it is from no personal motive that I thus call attention to facts of this kind. I am asking nothing for myself. When this report appears I shall have severed the connection that has held me to you and to the schools.

I have been experimenting for the benefit of my successors, and having poured into the work, eleven of the best years of my life, and nearly all my strength, until, in a worse pecuniary condition than when I began, I am about to seek a recovery of health in another climate, and I feel it my duty to speak plainly on this subject.

The labor of the office, under existing laws, is enormous. I have travelled 5,000 miles annually; have spoken from 22 to 26 hours a week, for seven weeks, annually, in the Institutes,—the statistics and Registers require ten weeks; the general visitation of the State requires at least ten weeks; the Normal Schools from five to six weeks; beside the time required by the Annual Reports, and the correspondence of the office is both voluminous and important, and growing daily more so.

And in the light of my own experience, as well as in view of the responsibility and labor of the office, and the infinite opportunity it affords for the exercise of abilities of the most commanding character, the salary of the Secretary of your Board should be at least double what it was designated in 1856.

The post of Secretary of the Board of Education is intrinsically as important, and, properly filled, as useful as any office under the Constitution and laws of the State.

It affords as fair scope for zeal, learning, ability, judgment and energy as any other State office, and should command the services of as good men as occupy the bench of the Supreme Court, by offering the same salary that is given to its Judges.

I wish again to call attention, in the words of last Annual Report, to the

BRANCHES NOT REQUIRED IN THE SCHOOLS.

It is worthy of notice that, while in other States, the established courses of study have been from time to time enlarged in their scope, and variously extended, to meet the constantly increasing educational demands of the prevalent public sentiment, in our own State, the requirements of the law have remained unchanged, with one exception, for more than half a century. A few years since a change was made in the general law by which instruction was required in the Geography, History and Constitution of our State. Now, while the rudi-

ments of a common school culture, with whatever changes of method, must remain essentially the same in character for many years, it requires little consideration to convince any fair mind that no school system can adapt itself to the changing and growing wants of the communities for whose benefit it is established, without occasional and progressive enlargements of its scope, and proportionate additions to its course of studies.

An examination will show that several topics which have prominent positions in the list of subjects in which instruction is required by law in other States, are not mentioned at all among the legal requirements of our State school law. The enlargement of the scope of our common schools, by adding somewhat to the list of branches in which instruction shall be given, and thus imperatively requiring instruction in those topics that are thus added,—or by allowing instruction in them under certain conditions,—would do much to disarm certain objections to the practical working of our schools.

The exclusion of Physical Geography, Music, Drawing, Physiology, Composition and Book-keeping from the legal list of topics of instruction in the public schools, has often been cited as sufficient inducement,—in order to supply the deficiencies of the public schools,—for the establishment and support of a multitude of private and select schools that, by diverting from the public schools the interest and patronage of influential men, have much obstructed and retarded the improvement of the appliances and agencies of popular education.

Again, it is often alleged, in derogation of the character of our Public Schools, that the different branches are taught in such a lifeless and ineffectual manner, and with such remote reference to the realization of any immediate and practical benefit therefrom, that many a child spends the whole of his school life in the diligent and apparently successful pursuit of the so-called common branches and yet his Geography gives him little knowledge of his own country or of the world at large, that is beneficial in the way of expansion or improvement; his English Grammar gives him no ability to write or speak his native tongue, that is of actual service to him; and having mastered the arithmetical text-book, he remains as before incompetent to understand, without further instruction, or take part in the most common business operations.

There can be little doubt that if all the common graded schools were required to give instruction in Book-keeping and Physical Geography and in Composition, much more of practical benefit would result from their efforts. And if by a change of law all the Public Schools, of every grade, were required, whenever the District so order by vote, to furnish adequate instruction in Vocal Music, Physiology and Drawing, the chief ground manifested for the preference of private and select schools would be taken away.

It may be remarked also, in regard to the topics last named, that properly used they may be made to exert a powerful influence upon

our schools, in a direction where such influence is very greatly needed.

Whatever agency can be brought to bear upon the schools of the State, that will have a tendency to elevate, purify and refine the character of the children who attend them, must in the opinion of those who are best acquainted with the tendencies of school life, be of inestimable value. Many of the evil traits of character, exhibited by school children, result as frequently from the utter neglect of teachers and parents to induce good habits of thought and to inspire with pure and noble feelings, as they do from the natural proclivities to wrong and vicious courses of which all careless and unruly children are suspected. But let Physical Geography throw an attractive hue over the study of Geography as commonly pursued, by turning the attention of children towards the ingenuity, the majesty and the exquisitely beautiful adaption, exhibited in the co-operating agencies of the winds and waters, the mountains and valleys; the rocks and the deserts, and in the varieties of animal and vegetable life, and you gain a power to speak to the souls that have never before been roused, that can be made almost to transform the very natures of those brought under such influences. How many careless and idle and vicious boys grow up into useless, harsh and vicious men from being neglected in early years in regard to a right cultivation of the heart as well as the head.

The future of the adult depends vastly more upon the tastes that are fostered or neglected in early years than is commonly supposed; and many a man is hard and harsh, and with no susceptibility to the refining and softening agencies of life, simply because the finer and softer capabilities of his nature have been allowed to slumber through all the days of his boyhood.

The cultivation and development in early life of those capacities and tastes, that will in their very development as well directly promote individual and general happiness as they will guard against the more common sources of unhappiness, by giving a capacity to secure the highest pleasure in the quiet pursuits and enjoyments of the home circle, is a subject of the highest conceivable importance.

Why not then, in the common school, let Music and Drawing be allowed a fair chance to contend with roughness, coarseness and profanity in obtaining a permanent and formative power over the characters of the children of our State?

It is a fortunate thing, that if, as is so often said, we are all the creatures of habit, the statement is as true of good habits as it is of bad ones. Many a hard boy loves to indulge in vulgar and profane language and to lounge his days and nights away in all accessible idling places, because no one ever taught him otherwise. A boy who loves to sing will be less likely to swear, and one who can find a true and quiet pleasure in the exercise of his natural appreciation of the beautiful in nature and art by developing his faculty for drawing

in his own quiet and pleasant home will waste little time in the streets or the groceries.

I most earnestly hope that a modification of our laws will enable the schools to enlist all the power that Music and Drawing, and other similar agencies, may have in softening and purifying the character of the pupils in our schools.

HAS ANYTHING BEEN ACCOMPLISHED IN ELEVEN YEARS?

The executive management of State agencies in the field of educational labor having remained in the hands of one person for nearly eleven years, it will be natural for all to inquire whether anything worthy of note has been brought about, before the direction of these agencies shall pass into other hands.

The educational history of the State for five years previous to the organization of the Board of Education is almost an entire blank, but full of significance. During all these years, the law of the State required, in the language of the Compiled Statutes, that "there shall be a State Superintendent of common schools who shall be annually appointed by the Joint Assembly," and yet in the face of the law, such was the utter apathy and indifference of the people, and so faithfully was it represented in the legislature, that no appointment of State Superintendent was made, and all operation of State agencies ceased; and the remarkable spectacle was presented of the Legislature of a republican State openly violating a well known law, and conducting legislation for five consecutive years with no provision for gathering any information in regard to the intellectual condition of her one hundred thousand children, and no State supervision whatever.

It would be difficult to find a parallel to this in any other Christian and free State.

The natural results followed, of course. All interest in schools diminished; school property depreciated; the attendance upon schools grew rapidly less; private and select schools and academies multiplied; the general mind was benumbed, and indifference reigned supreme.

At last, in 1856, almost by accident, certainly with no general expectation of favorable results, by action of the Legislature, the Board of Education was created.

But, when, under the law, the Board came together, composed of Messrs. Pease, Bradley, Redfield, and Gov. Fletcher and Lt. Gov. Slade as *ex officio* members, they determined to make an effort to carry out the spirit of the law, and organized by electing a Secretary, who has continued to occupy that post till the present time.

Immediately upon their complete organization, the Board blocked out the plan upon which they wished the educational work of the State to be conducted, and announced that plan to the Secretary in writing, and

it was published to the people of the State in a circular, containing likewise a statement of my own views and feelings in regard to the instructions of the Board, together with some statistical inquiries.

The instructions of the Board were as follows :

" BURLINGTON, January 26, 1857.

To J. S. ADAMS, Esq., Secretary, &c.

Dear Sir :—I have been commissioned by the Board of Education, to furnish you with a condensed statement of their views and wishes, by which they expect you to be guided in the discharge of your duties, as Secretary, viz :

1. It is the opinion of the Board that the system of Common Schools, as now established by law, in the State, is a good one, adapted to the spirit of our institutions and the character of our people, and capable, by its own natural growth, to meet the growing wants of our communities.

2. You are expected, therefore, to direct your efforts mainly to the development of the system as you find it, suiting your proceedings to the condition and circumstances of the different communities which you may visit, endeavoring to awaken interest in the subject, where such interest is lacking, and seeking in all proper ways to guide it, where it exists, into wise channels and towards the best practicable ends.

3. The Board are convinced that the real sentiments of our people are radically sound and just on the great interest of our Common Schools, and it is their wish that you should act in accordance with it, so far as practicable; and that you should endeavor to disabuse the communities, if any such exist, where wrong impressions have been formed and injurious prejudices and jealousies have been cherished; being fully persuaded that there will be found no important difference of sentiment or aim, between the Board and the public, if their feelings are mutually understood.

4. It is expected, therefore, that you will carefully study the wants and opinions of the State, on the subject, and ascertain the views and secure the co-operation and advice of intelligent persons in the several Districts, so far as practicable, devoting special attention to the more remote and less populous portions of the State.

5. You are cautioned, also, against any efforts prematurely to introduce any arrangements and modifications not recognized and provided for in the existing statutory provisions, for, such modifications, although they may have proved useful elsewhere, may not now be expedient or necessary here, and should be introduced, only as called for by the felt wants and distinct demands of the people.

6. You are expected by private conversation and public lecturing throughout the State, to call out the latent right sentiment, which, it is confidently believed, exists, and to give it a unity of aim and expression; and so prepare the way for the ready and harmonious introduction of such modifications and improvements as time and experience may recommend.

7. You are requested to take particular pains to effect a more general acquaintance with the laws on the subject of our Common Schools. In order to this, it is suggested that you answer all inquiries, so far as may be, by a reference to the statutes, as, for example with reference to the holding of school meetings, to the formation of Union Districts, to the holding of Institutes, to the examination of teachers, to the introduction or change of School Books, and to many other matters which are either not understood or are disregarded. It is believed that much may be done, in this way, to cause the School Law to be felt and appreciated.

8. You are expected to fulfil, as far as possible, the requirements of the act of the last session constituting a Board of Education, especially with respect to the collection of statistics, the holding of Institutes, and the general visitation of the State, in order to procure materials for a clear and instructive report to the Legislature, at its next session.

9. Finally, with these general instructions, the subject is committed to your fidelity and care, with the confident expectation and trust that your ability and zeal in the cause, will be best guided by your own observation, reflection and experience, as you go on, and with the assured feeling that the great interests involved, are safe in your hands.

C. PEASE,

For the Board of Education of the State of Vermont."

My own views and purposes at the time, and the spirit with which I entered upon the work, are indicated in the following extracts from the same circular :

"When it was announced that an Act establishing the "Vermont Board of Education" had been enacted by the State Legislature, the great body of the people recognized in it a judicious movement in the right direction; and anticipations were immediately entertained that it *might* be productive of good, though these anticipations were based rather upon hope than upon expectation.

The general sentiment was, and is, that if a cautious and gradual, but positive and determined, effort to improve and develop the present system of public Schools, asking only such future legislation as should be evidently necessary to this development,—were commenced and persistently adhered to, it would deserve and command success.

But the feeling was universal, that only such modifications of our School Laws, would be satisfactory, as a knowledge of the condition of the Schools, ascertained from the statistics collected under the provisions of the law, should demonstrate to be indispensable; and such as should thereafter be demanded of the Legislature by the people themselves.

To preserve whatever of good there is in our present system, to develop it to the utmost, first, and then to provide other means and measures, was the conclusion of all.

But while the law constituting the Board was thus welcomed, a vague but powerful apprehension prevailed, that any Board that might be selected would be composed of "theoretical" men, who in dreaming brilliant dreams, not likely to be realized, would neglect those practical improvements that might be worked out, and borne up by the ærial tendency of their own balloon-like schemes, would soar entirely out of sight of Common Schools and common men.

The announcement of the names of the men who compose the Board, has itself, measurably allayed this apprehension in the public mind. And it is believed, that in no way, can all such doubts and apprehensions be so effectually put to rest, as by making generally known the written instructions of the Board to their Secretary.

Again, a general movement of the whole people, in favor of perfecting the State System of Public Schools, is the result desired. Such movement must, of course, have its agents and directors, but it can only make true and permanent progress, when it has secured the hearty and intelligent co-operation of the great mass of the people; and in order to this it is essential, 1st, that the people should fully understand the purposes and aims of the movement; 2d, that they should fully approve them; and 3d, that they should know the means and instrumentalities that are to be used, and recognize them as unobjectionable, honorable, and likely to be efficacious.

It is confidently believed that such a purpose, to be effected by such means, will be received, not passively and reluctantly, but earnestly and with a will and an intelligent purpose to profit thereby; while on the other hand, any Patent Scheme or occult machinery, for the speedy and miraculous education of a whole State, whether willing or unwilling, that any body of half-wise men might invent or undertake, by any measure of dictation to force forward, would be spurned with contempt, and perhaps give rise to another period of inaction and deadness upon this great subject.

Concurring entirely in the spirit of these instructions, and fully believing that their publication will operate as a relief to the people of the whole State, from doubts that may have existed as to the probable course of the Board, and thus by their apparent justice and practical common sense, will preclude opposition that possibly might arise, I have made them public by consent of the Board.

Not unaware of the responsibilities and labors of the post of Secretary, it was tendered to me without solicitation, and I have accepted it with a sincere determination, so far as I have the power, to carry out these instructions in their letter and spirit.

Neither confident nor diffident in my own ability to do justice to the magnitude and importance of the enterprise thus so far entrusted to me, knowing the people of Vermont and their individual and general interest in Education in all its branches, I have an abiding confidence that the intelligent and hearty co-operation of the people of Vermont with the Board they have created, in a judicious and practical development

of the excellencies of our School System, will effectually correct any errors, as well as profit by any successes that may be attributable to me."

Instructed as above, and animated by the spirit and inspired by the hopes indicated, I entered upon my appointed work with no expectation of continuing it for any length of time, and borne down with an oppressive sense of my own incompetency, which has never since grown less.

The work of the first year was indescribably difficult and laborious. It became necessary, almost, to create any external indications of interest, so wide-spread was the apathy, that an educational discussion seemed to be almost unlawful in the eyes of many. But after once traversing the State, light began to break in upon the previous darkness; interest once awakened, has never slept, but gone on continually increasing, and working out the desired results.

The first visible fruits of labor were manifested in the legislation of the Legislature of 1858. A Bill had been presented to the previous Legislature embodying certain suggestions for modifications of law that appeared in the First Annual Report. The Bill failed at the first session—it was dismissed for "want of time." The provisions of that Bill were discussed throughout the State in every section, and passed by an unanimous vote at the next session. A glance at the Act, as passed, will show that it effected a decided and radical change of the existing School System.

The Act was as follows:

AN ACT RELATING TO COMMON SCHOOLS. ✓

APPROVED NOV. 23, 1858.

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont, as follows:

SEC. 1. The several Towns in this State shall, at their annual March Meeting, elect one person to be Superintendent of Common Schools within such Town, who shall hold his office during the school year commencing on the first day of April next after his election, and when appointed by the Selectmen, during the remainder of the then current school year; and who shall receive for his services one dollar for each day necessarily spent in the discharge of his legal duties, and a reasonable sum for his annual report to the March Meeting; and his accounts shall be audited by the Court Auditor of the County in which he resides, and when approved shall be paid out of the State Treasury upon the order of the various County Clerks, who are hereby authorized to draw orders therefor; but no order shall be drawn by any County Clerk for the amount thus allowed to any Superintendent until such Superintendent shall have filed with such Clerk the receipt of the Secretary of the Board of Education for the statistical return of the preceding school year, required by law of such Superintendent; but no Superintendent shall receive compensation for his services while visiting

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Schools for a number of days greater than twice the number of Schools in the Town for which he acts.

SEC. 2. The statistical returns required by law to be made to the Secretary of the Board by the Town Superintendents of Schools annually on or before the first day of September, shall hereafter be made and returned to the Secretary on or before the first day of April of each year, and the Secretary is directed on the receipt of such return, to forward a certificate thereof to the Superintendent making the return.

SEC. 3. The examination of teachers by Town Superintendents shall be public, and held in some public place after due notice given pursuant to law, in the months of May and November of each year, and citizens generally invited to attend; and no examination of teachers shall be held at any other time or in any other manner except in the discretion of the Superintendent, and for the accommodation of teachers prevented by sickness or other unavoidable circumstances from attending at the regular public examination, and any Superintendent examining teachers at any other time than the regular public examination, shall be entitled to receive from each teacher applying for such examination the sum of fifty cents.

SEC. 4. Whenever, upon personal examination of Schools, the Superintendent of any Town shall become satisfied beyond a reasonable doubt, that a teacher to whom a certificate has been granted, is incompetent to teach or govern his School properly, or setting an evil example before his School, the Superintendent is hereby empowered in his discretion to revoke the certificate theretofore granted to such teacher, by filing in the Town Clerk's office of such Town a statement in writing of his having made such revocation, and delivering a copy thereof to the Prudential Committee, and also to the teacher whose certificate is so revoked; and every teacher's certificate that shall have been duly revoked pursuant to the provisions of this section shall immediately, upon the filing of such revocation, become thereafter null and void and of no effect, and such teacher's contract with the School District shall become void therefrom, and it shall not be lawful for the Prudential Committee to pay such teacher for any services thereafter performed as teacher.

SEC. 5. The division of the public money required by section seventy-one of chapter twenty of the Compiled Statutes, to be made between the several School Districts, in each Town, on the first day of March annually, shall hereafter be made on the last Tuesday in March in each year.

SEC. 6. That portion of the public money which is now by law required to be divided annually, to the respective Districts in each Town, in proportion to the number of their scholars between four and eighteen years of age, shall hereafter be divided to such Districts in proportion to the average daily attendance of the scholars of such Districts (who are between the ages of four and twenty years) upon the Common School in such Districts during the preceding school year;

such average daily attendance to be ascertained from the record thereof to be kept in the registers of such Schools as is prescribed in this act, by adding together the number of days of actual attendance of each legal scholar, as shown by the record, and dividing the sum or aggregate attendance, by the number of days the school has been kept during the year, the quotient to be considered the average daily attendance required.

SEC. 7. The Secretary of the Board of Education is hereby required to prescribe blank forms for a school register, conveniently arranged for keeping a daily record of the attendance of children upon the School, and containing printed interrogatories addressed to teachers, and to District Clerks, for the procurement of such statistical information as the Board may seek to obtain in each year; and in the month of January of each year, the Secretary shall procure and furnish to the Town Clerk in each Town in the State, a sufficient number of such registers to supply each District Clerk in said Town with one register for each School in his District for the ensuing school year. And it is hereby made the duty of each Town Clerk to receive such registers for his Town, and immediately forward by mail to the Secretary his receipt therefor; and on failure to receive such registers by the first day of February in each year, the Town Clerk shall immediately notify the Secretary thereof, who shall supply the deficiency forthwith. And it is made the duty of each District Clerk, during the first week in March annually, to procure of the Town Clerk a register for each School in his District, and be responsible for the safe keeping thereof.

SEC. 8. It is hereby made the duty of every teacher of a Common School, before he commences his School, to procure from the Clerk of the District in which he shall teach, a school register, and therein keep a true record of the daily attendance of each scholar who may attend such School, while under his instruction, in accordance with the form prescribed in such register, and at the close of his School shall enter in said register correct answers to all statistical inquiries therein addressed to teachers, and return such register to the District Clerk previous to the receipt of his wages as such teacher. And it is hereby made the duty of each District Clerk to comply with all the requirements made of him in the register or registers of his District, in reference to the statistics of his District, and make oath to the correctness of his returns before a Justice of the Peace of the County in which he resides, and file said register or registers in the office of the Town Clerk, on or before the twenty-first day of March in each year; and no portion of the public money in any Town shall be distributed to any District whose school register or registers shall not be properly filled out and filed in the Town Clerk's office, pursuant to the provisions of this act.

SEC. 9. The time, not to exceed two days, actually spent by any teacher of a Common School in attendance upon the Teacher's Institute, held pursuant to law, in the County in which such teacher shall be employed, during the time for which such teacher is engaged to

teach such school, shall be considered as time lawfully expended by such teacher in the service of the District by which he is employed, and in the legitimate performance of his contract as teacher.

SEC. 10. The Chairmen of the Prudential Committees of the various Districts composing the Union District, shall together constitute the Prudential Committee of the Union District, and the member of the Prudential Committee of any School District first elected, shall be considered the Chairman thereof: *Provided*, that whenever such Union District shall be formed of an even number of Districts, there shall be added to said Committee one person, resident in such Union District, who shall be chosen annually at any legal meeting of said Union District duly warned for that purpose, and who shall hold his office for one year thereafter, and until another shall be chosen.

SEC. 11. The Board of Education is hereby directed to select, or procure to be selected, a list of grammars, geographies, arithmetics, readers and spellers, to be used in the District Schools of this State, limiting the text books in each of said branches to one or more, in their discretion. Such selection shall be made previous to January first, A. D. 1859, and shall be published in all the newspapers in the State, in said month of January, A. D. 1859, and also inserted in each school register. And said list of books, when thus made and published, shall become authoritative and binding upon the Board of Education, Superintendents and teachers until January first, A. D. 1864, and teachers and Superintendents shall recommend for use in the District Schools, as new books shall become necessary for instruction in the branches named, no other than books included in said list so established.

SEC. 12. The Secretary of the Board of Education shall annually prepare and print 3,500 copies of his Annual Report, and have the same ready for distribution on the assembling of the Legislature in each year, and shall distribute the same as follows: one copy to each Town Superintendent; one copy to each District Clerk; and one copy to each Principal of a High School, Union School or Academy, in the State; the necessary copies for all except Members of the Legislature to be forwarded by the Secretary to the various County Clerks and by them distributed in the same manner in which the Laws are distributed.

SEC. 13. It is hereby made the duty of the Trustees of all Academies, and Grammar Schools, which have been incorporated by the Legislature of the State of Vermont, to cause their Principals to return the Secretary of the Board of Education, on or before the first day April in each year, true and correct answers to such statistical queries as may have been addressed to them by the Secretary, in month of January previous.

SEC. 14. All acts and parts of acts inconsistent with the provisions of this act are hereby repealed.

SEC. 15. This act shall take effect from its passage, provided the apportionment of the public money to the various School Dis-

for the school year ending on the last day of March, A. D. 1859, shall be made on the last Tuesday of March, A. D. 1859, in accordance with the provisions of the law existing at the time of the passage of this act.

Approved Nov. 23, 1858.

By this brief legislation the existing School System was wonderfully strengthened and invigorated in many of its best features, and, as will appear upon slight examination, new features of great value and working power were added.

It created a system of statistics in regard to Schools equal, if not superior, to any in existence.

It revolutionized the office of Town Superintendent, by making them to be paid from the State Treasury and responsible to the State for statistical returns.

It established the most complete and economical plan of School Registers that can be found.

By putting the shaping and control of the Registers and statistical interrogatories into the hands of the Secretary of the Board, it practically recognized that unity of purpose that is indispensable to successful direction and control of executive labor.

It changed entirely the basis of the distribution of the public money, making out of it a powerful agency in promoting a larger attendance upon the Public Schools.

It created and gave efficiency to the Institutes by encouraging the attendance of teachers.

It went a great ways in securing a possible improvement in the capacity of teachers, by inaugurating public examinations.

It secured that subordination of teachers, without which State agencies are powerless, by providing for a contingent revocation of certificates.

It diminished the number of classes, and thus by concentrating the powers of teachers and taught, added largely to the efficiency of the Schools, by providing for an uniform list of school text books.

It added to the power of all existing agencies by providing for a general distribution of the Annual Reports of Board and Secretary.

And all these various provisions have been carried into active operation, and have now become recognized as essential and useful parts of the school legislation of the State.

Through the Institutes, educational meetings, statistical inquiries, Superintendent's Reports and Annual Reports, there has resulted that wide-spread and persistent agitation of the public mind, that in matters educational as well as political and social, is the all-powerful agency which has in the past, and will in the future, secure both necessary modifications of law and improved methods of operating existing legislation, from which alone progressive improvement can come.

And from these modifications of law, this wide discussion, have come

results that compare favorably with any displayed in the history of eleven years of educational progress in any other State.

Within these years, in addition to the important changes of law that have been enumerated, we may also claim as the natural results of the increase of educational life and vitality that has grown out of the efforts of the Board of Education and its agents, the establishment of a State Agricultural College, in conjunction with one of the State Colleges, which has already begun to give indications of a vigorous and useful life; the organization and establishment of a State Reform School, most successfully and beautifully working upon a new plan; and the establishment of a system of State Normal Schools.

When we consider the almost benighted and hopeless apathy that reigned supreme at the time of the organization of the Board, and then review the history of the last eleven years, surely every friend of education may well take courage.

It is certain that in very many of our Schools can be found methods of instruction vastly in advance of those that were known in schools of the same grade but a few years ago, and this is an indication of what may be done in the future.

But perhaps the increased attendance upon the Institutes, and the multiplication of Graded Schools in the State, yield the most satisfactory indications of sound practical advancement.

During the first year after organization the Institutes were comparatively thinly attended. On one occasion, after sweeping the house and ringing the bell, I waited the whole forenoon without a single attendant; on another I began the exercises of an Institute with a single hearer. But soon the attendance began to increase, till from audiences of from thirty to sixty, they have in recent years become quite large, numbering from five hundred to still larger gatherings. During the last year the attendance has at times gone up to ten and twelve hundred, and the increase in attendance has been accompanied with a corresponding increase in interest.

When the Board was organized, although ample legal provision existed for the establishment of Union and Graded Schools, there were but few in existence. Windsor, Woodstock, Brattleboro', Bellows Falls, Rutland and Burlington, were, I think, the only towns thus favored. Now scarcely a large village in the State that is not provided with higher Schools of some description; and still the sentiment in favor of Graded Schools is steadily increasing.

This steady progress is remarkable from the fact that now, for so many years, no step backwards has been taken, but every inch of ground once won has been fairly and strongly held. There have been no sudden and startling advances, to be followed by as capricious and startling retrogression, but ever and always, the march of educational improvement has gone for eleven years onward and upward.

For all this progressive advancement and elevation, the State is indebted to the wise and considerate legislation that first established and regulated the quiet but powerful organization of a Board of Education, which has inaugurated and sustained a prudent and persistent agitation that has brought its rich harvest of desirable results. In the second place, the State is deeply indebted,—no one can say how deeply,—to the men who constituted the first Board of Education. Of the three who, exclusive of the official members, formed that first Board, two of them have gone to their reward: one only remains. Calvin Pease, keen, brilliant and daring, full of faith, full of courage, and full of determination; Dorr Bradley, genial, judicious and resolute,—their places are, and will long remain vacant; their colleague, Hon. T. P. Redfield still survives. It is not improper for me, with heartfelt recollections of their courtesy and kindness to me, and of their high purposes and strong good sense in their new and difficult position, to say, as within my own personal knowledge, that the successes that have been attained and the results that have been reached, have been mainly owing to the rare good sense, and unswerving firmness of the gentlemen composing the first Board of Education, and time will select as the richest among all their public services, their services in the cause of Vermont education. It is pleasant to look over the first ten years, and recall no conflict of opinions, no hardness of feeling and no unkind word, as occurring between the members of the Board, or between any of them and their Secretary. Of one mind and animated by a single purpose, all seemed to work together harmoniously for a common end.

And no doubt can exist but that very much of the progress made, such as it is, has been accelerated and assured by this unanimity of views and harmony of action between the members of the Board, and between the Board and its executive agent. This was particularly illustrated in the somewhat lively discussion that took place in this State during the fourth year of the organization of the Board, in reference to compulsory instruction in the Bible in our schools. This question at one time or another has powerfully disturbed the operation of the school system of many of our sister States, and indeed of other countries. As is said in a recent article of great force in "The Nation" newspaper, on the present condition of parties in this country. "It is an easy step from a genuine Christian sympathy with others, and a desire to aid them, to a feeling that we have a right—may are under an obligation, to force our aid upon them and reform them even against their will." So in reference to the discussion above referred to. Much feeling was manifested and a good degree of excitement prevailed; but the Board of Education, wisely so selected as to represent each a different religious denomination, stood as one man in support of the position taken by their Secretary, that in Vermont there was no legal or constitutional sanction for compulsory instruction in the Bible as a

text-book, and by their unanimity and the good sense of the Legislature, the position taken was sustained, this most troublesome of modern social and moral questions was finally determined, and the school system left unfettered to use its whole strength in the accomplishment of its work. No further disturbance can arise from this source unless, which one would suppose could hardly be anticipated, the control of the educational machinery of the State, should by the carelessness or neglect of the people, in spite of all the warnings of the past, be suffered to pass entirely and permanently into the hands of some one of our many religious denominations.

THE AUTHORIZED LIST OF SCHOOL BOOKS.

A diversity of school text-books, arising mainly from a frequent change of teachers, and the nomadic character of families, has always been found to be a serious obstacle in the way of school improvement. In the hands of ordinary teachers, who are better prepared to teach the words of the text-books than the ideas and principles embodied therein, there seems to be a necessity for as many classes in each branch as there are text-books, and consequently a diversity of books leads to a multiplicity of classes, which is fatal to good teaching. In the second place, each teacher preferring to teach from a familiar text-book, habitually recommends the book from which he was taught, as the best, and parents are thus in a measure compelled to buy annually a new book, as the new teacher makes his appearance, and thus the expense of books, an important item in school expense, is often unnecessarily increased, and much and wide spread dissatisfaction results.

It will be found that State after State has encountered the difficulties that naturally result from a diversity of school text-books, and each in turn has endeavored to devise some relief, and many have at some time in their educational progress attempted to secure some kind of uniformity in their school books. But it is thought that our State is the first that has secured for a series of years a tolerable uniformity.

During the second year after the organization of the Board, among other amendments to the School Law, it was enacted as follows:

The Board of Education is hereby directed to select, or procure to be selected, a list of grammars, geographies, arithmetics, readers and spellers, to be used in the district schools in this State, limiting the text books in each of said branches to one or more, in their discretion. Such selection shall be made previous to January first, A. D. 1859, and shall be published in all the newspapers in the State, in said month of January, A. D. 1859, and also inserted in each school register. And said list of books, when thus made and pub.

lished, shall become authoritative and binding upon the Board of Education, Superintendents and teachers until January 1st, A. D., 1864, and teachers and Superintendents shall recommend for use in the district schools, as new books shall become necessary for instruction in the branches named, no other than books included in said list, so established.

This is probably the most succinct legal provision for a work of this kind that can be found in any State; yet, proceeding upon the supposition that the Board of Education were competent to discharge the special work to which they were appointed, and not only could, but would perform it in all faithfulness and honor, it is proved to be amply sufficient for its purpose. It accomplished its work well in the State, and was quoted outside the State as a model of "simplicity and comprehensiveness." The Board, pursuant to the above enactment, met in December, 1858 and, after patient hearing of all that was to be said by all interested, proceeded to make a selection of text books, and announced their decision by the publication of the following list:

SPELLERS.—For primary classes in ordinary District Schools, "Progressive Lessons in the English Language." (Publishers: R. Farnham, Jr., & Co., Bradford, Vt.)

For advanced classes in ordinary District Schools, and for Graded and Union Schools, "Worcester's Pronouncing Spelling book." (Hickling, Swan & Brewer, Boston.)

READERS.—For the ordinary District Schools, Town and Holbrook's Primer, and First, Second, and Third Readers, and Common School Reader and Speaker.

For Graded and Union Schools, Town and Holbrook's Common School Reader and Speaker, and Progressive Fourth and Fifth Readers." (Bazin & Ellsworth, Boston.)

GRAMMARS.—For ordinary District Schools "Tower's Elements of Grammar," (Crosby, Nichols & Co., Boston,) and Gould Brown's "First Lines of English Grammar." (S. S. & W. Wood & Co., New York.)

For Graded and Union Schools, "Well's Grammar of the English Language." (Iverson & Phinney, New York,) and Bullion's "Analytical and Practical English Grammar." (Pratt, Oakley & Co., New York.)

GEOGRAPHIES.—For ordinary District Schools, Cornell's "First Steps, Primary and Grammar School Geographies,"—(omitting Cornell's Intermediate.)

For Graded and Union Schools, Cornell's "High School Geography and Companion Atlas." (D. Appleton & Co., New York.)

ARITHMETICS.—For ordinary District Schools, Greenleaf's "Primary, Intellectual, and Common School" Arithmetics.

For Graded and Union Schools, Greenleaf's "Higher Arithmetics." (R. S. Davis & Co., Boston.)

For mental exercises in all the Public Schools, Warren Colburn's "Intellectual Arithmetic." (Brown, Taggard & Chase, Boston.)

The general principles upon which the Board proceeded were announced in the Annual Report as follows.—

"Hence it was apparent to the Board, as men of practical judgment, that *uniformity of books* was the *leading* object of the law, and that it became their duty, as prudent men, having regard to the future enforcement of the law, and seeking to insure a general satisfaction on the part of the people with its thorough enforcement, not simply to designate what they considered to be the best books published, but, taking into view and having reference to all the known facts respecting the condition of the schools, the preferences of the Teachers and people, the existing prevalence of the books, and the comparative expense at which they could be furnished, to make a selection that with the least revolutionary change, at the least possible expense, and with the least probability of general dissatisfaction, would secure at some short period of time, an approximation to a uniformity of books, combining cheapness and intrinsic excellence, as far as possible under all the existing circumstances of the schools.

It was desirable also, to make the selection in such a way as to relieve the Board of all imputation of any assumption of powers more dictatorial than were really required by the law, and leave the authorized list free from all foundation for any charge of creating a book monopoly."

Some of the reasons by which the Board were influenced in the selection of Readers, Grammars, Geographies and Arithmetics, were also stated in the Report as follows :—

In the consideration of the matter of Readers, Town's Readers, Town and Holbrook's Progressive, Hillard's and Sargent's series, were found to be all, in the main, excellent series of books, amply sufficient for the wants of the schools, though neither were entirely free from defects and mistakes.

But certain facts appeared from the correspondence of the Board, and from the other evidence offered, that seemed to control, in a great degree, the decision.

The schools and Teachers were tired with Town's series, that had been thumbed over for ten years, though an excellent series of themselves in many respects ; and it appeared that already, acting under the old law, the conventions of Superintendents in six of the fourteen Counties in the State had already formally recommended the Town and Holbrook series, and that in those Counties the books were to be generally found in the schools and book stores, while Sargent's and Hillard's series were to be found in only a few isolated schools.

And an examination showed the books to be inferior to none that were brought to the attention of the Board, as a series for use in the

schools, to be thoroughly and strongly bound, in a neat and tasteful manner, and afforded at a reasonable price.

Under all these circumstances the Board felt constrained to adopt and did adopt the Progressive Readers.

GRAMMARS.

In the matter of Grammars, so great a diversity of books, and so constant a change from one to the other, were found to prevail in the schools, that an opportunity seemed to be offered to make such a selection as should of itself amend some of the common errors in grammatical instruction largely prevalent in the schools.

A tendency to teach Grammar to children almost entirely as a *science*, and to disregard it as an art ; and an appropriation of almost the whole time of young pupils to mere repetition of the text book, to the exclusion of that practice in the use of language, without which no one becomes a good grammarian ; and a proclivity to an inversion of the natural and proper order and arrangement of topics in the instruction given, by turning the attention of younger pupils towards analysis and the higher and more difficult portions of Grammar, before they have become thoroughly conversant with the very elements and simplest technology—are, in the opinion of sound practical Teachers, the prevailing fault in our schools.

With a view to remedy these, the selection of Grammars was made—and the selections give to the common schools as their first text-book, Tower's Elements, a little book that, while it contains enough of analysis for elementary instruction, forces the Teacher to unite the practical use of the language with the acquisition of the words of the text-book. And it may be remarked that many of the most successful Teachers affirm it to be sufficient for all the purposes of common schools.

At the same time, that some latitude of choice may remain to Teachers, Gould Brown's First Lines of English Grammar is added.

And for Union and Graded Schools, Wells' Grammar and Bullion's Analytical and Practical Grammar, which give to thorough analysis its proper position in the arrangement of Grammatical topics, were adopted as at once good in themselves, and having a tendency to correct prevailing errors

GEOGRAPHIES.

No text-book in Geography seemed to be in sufficiently general use to be said to control the field of choice, although the diversity of books was large enough.

And here the Board felt at liberty to take what in their opinion was the *best* book. Accordingly, Cornell's series of Geographies, omitting the intermediate Geography, was chosen as decidedly the best series of School Geographies extant, and amply sufficient for the wants of all grades of our schools.

ARITHMETICS.

By the evidence before the Board, it appeared that Greenleaf's Arithmetics were already in very general use in the State, and probably in more than one-half of all the schools of all grades. This being the fact, and these books, maintaining their place in the first rank of text-books in this branch of instruction, and by the completeness of the series being adapted to the various grades of the schools here, it was not deemed advisable, by the recommendation of other books of disputed or doubtful superiority, to make so sweeping a change as practically must, in the process of time, follow the recommendation of the Board, and Greenleaf's Arithmetics were selected. The merits of Colburn's Mental Arithmetic are so universally acknowledged by the best teachers as to make any comment on its adoption useless.

It will be observed that the Arithmetics and the Readers selected, had been for several years in the schools in nearly half the State, and were considered fair text-books of their kinds, and selected on account of that "controlling" reason mainly.

The Geographies were new books, and were chosen as "decidedly" "the best series of School Geographies extant, and amply sufficient" "for the wants of all grades of our schools."

Proceeding upon so reasonable a basis, and guided by eminent good sense and discretion, and with special reference to the wants and condition of the schools, the Board met with unexpected success; and, although a fierce opposition existed for a few months, it soon subsided as the grounds for the selection were made apparent, and the list gave such satisfaction, that, being limited by its own terms to January 1, 1864, it was without the advice or solicitation of the Board, or the Secretary, subsequently extended to January 1, 1867.

And the chief grounds of its success are to be found in the facts:

1st. That by correspondence and consultation with eminent practical teachers, and with the Secretary of the Board, due deference was shown to the known public sentiment of the teachers of the State, and the list was adapted to the existing wants of the schools as communicated by the Secretary whose official duties were supposed to yield him good opportunities for observation and knowledge. -

2nd. The selection was so made as to distribute the profits to some ten different firms among the leading publishers of school books, so that each should have an interest in preserving the list, and none should have an interest so controlling as to tend to excite among others a disposition to distrust it.

3d. No book was adopted unless the Board and the Secretary unanimously concurred, and so the whole force of the State agencies was, in good faith, enlisted in defence and support of their joint work.

4th. Operating mainly through the rejection of books rather than in introducing entirely new ones, except in the case of Cornell's Geographies, it was comparatively inexpensive.

And the success attending the selection was great; not only was it the first successful attempt to secure uniformity of books for a term of years, in the whole country, but it worked most admirably in all the schools, creating an almost universal satisfaction, and effecting an annual saving to the State of many thousand dollars, while it added largely to the efficiency of all the schools.

But in process of time indications of dissatisfaction and desire to change appeared, and particularly in 1865 and 1866—a general disposition began to manifest itself among teachers and citizens for a change in the list by substitution, or addition, or both. This feeling was particularly recognizable in reference to Readers, Arithmetics, and Geographies.

Very many teachers, many of the best, declared that having used the Progressive Readers for eight years under the law and for some time previous to the selection of books, they and their pupils were completely wearied and disgusted and desired something novel and fresh.

Although in the former list, Greenleaf's Higher Arithmetic had never been recommended to any but the higher and graded schools, still such was the ambition of pupils to appear to be making great progress, that Greenleaf's Common School Arithmetic had almost disappeared from the Common Schools, and scholars were eagerly bringing the higher treatise into the schools, and teachers felt conscious of their inability under such circumstances, to confine the attention of their younger classes to that thorough mastery of the elements of arithmetic which they knew to be necessary; and were clamoring for a change.

Improved methods of teaching Geography upon a more philosophical plan than heretofore used, had been from time to time commended to all teachers and had been so favorably received that many could not tolerate longer the stereotyped and lifeless methods of hitherto in use, and so were desirous either of decided improvements in Cornell or of a change of books.

Of course, I became cognizant of the state of feeling and, indeed, aware that such feelings were naturally to be expected from the instructions given in our Institutes, or in any well conducted Institutes, where sound and thorough elementary instruction was advocated.

I had for ten years insisted in the Institutes upon the importance of thorough demonstration of principles as the highest duty of the teacher of arithmetic, and earnestly advised teachers to throw their strength and power here, rather than to waste their time and strength, and that of their pupils, in the solution of the more mathematical puzzles with which Greenleaf's Higher Arithmetic abounds, notifying

them that the higher book had never been recommended for the Common Schools, and that it would be well to drive them out of all the ungraded schools.

Long before the publication of Guyot's Geographies, the methods of teaching advised by him or those very similar had been annually recommended in the Institutes.

And immediately upon the publication of Willson's Readers, incorporating into the Readers the elementary principles of the various physical sciences, I had procured them and exhibited them for several years in the Institutes commending them to the attention of teachers until the better teachers were quite familiar with them, and many were much pleased with and preferred them.

The general sentiment of the teachers was soon found to be strongly in favor of a revision of the list, and I advocated it in the last Report saying among other things, as follows :

"The time limited therein for the termination of the binding force of this law will expire on the first day of January, 1867, now close at hand, and unless some legislative action is had at the approaching session, we shall of necessity be forced back to the condition of indescribable confusion in school books which existed before the establishment of the authorized selection of books.

There is quite a general sentiment, especially among the teachers, in favor of a thorough revision of the authorized list. While many of the text books selected have given satisfaction, some of them are much disliked. And this is not to be wondered at when we consider the circumstances under which the selection was made. Similar attempts to establish an authoritative list had failed in other States where they had been frequently made ; and the Board were disposed to proceed with great caution. In reference to several text books that were found to have been extensively introduced into the schools, the Board determined to include them in the list which was to be the first list of the kind established in the State, with little reference to their intrinsic worth, and mainly on the ground that any change of these books would cause an expense that would more than countervail any possible benefit that could result therefrom.

All of the books mentioned in the authorized list have now been in use in the schools for eight years, and some of them for a much longer time.

Within the last few years, numerous and valuable improvements have been introduced into the school books used in connection with all of the studies required in the schools ; and an opportunity is now offered to make a selection of school books that shall rest entirely upon the real merits of the books. There is within my own knowledge and within the knowledge of members of the Board, a very strong desire on the part of very many of our best teachers that a new selection should be made in the books relating to one or two of the leading branches of study.

So great is the dissatisfaction with some of these books, on the part of many teachers, that unless a change of the list shall bring some relief there is great danger of a general and increasing disregard of the law.

I may be allowed to express an earnest hope that the influence of our Honorable Board may be exerted to secure the revision of the authorized list of text books, by the passage of the necessary enactments at the approaching session of the Legislature."

And the revision was advised in the Report of the Board in the following language. And thus before the session of the Legislature of 1866, the public mind, by discussion, had not only become prepared for a revision of books, but expected such action from the Legislature.

At the annual meeting of the Board, held in the second week of the session on the 16th and 17th days of October, after I had been re-elected Secretary, it appears from the records of the meeting of October 17th, that "upon the suggestion of the Secretary that a probability existed that the Legislature, at its present session, would authorize and direct the Board of Education to revise the authorized list of school books, the authority of which would expire on the 1st day of January, A. D. 1867, and that the Board might possibly desire to advise with some of the practical teachers in the State in regard to the books to be selected; it was determined by the Board, that, in case such revision should be authorized, the course authorized by the Secretary ought to be taken.

"Whereupon, in order that Committees of eminent practical teachers might be selected by the Board to assist in making a revision of the authorized list of school books, should such revision be directed by the Legislature, it was ordered that, when the Board adjourn, they adjourn to re-assemble at the call of the Governor during the session of the Legislature." After the adjournment of the Board, the interest in the matter of text books, increased daily. Agents of publishers, and publishers themselves abounded; a strong lobby was formed and exercised itself vigorously on the subject of books, rumors of all kinds except reputable, abounded, of bribery and corruption against the Board, the Secretary and others, and a good degree of excitement followed. The Board was reconstructed both in its organization and in the persons of its members, and the law in regard to the revision of the authorized list of books was enacted.

The law re-constructing the Board of Education was as follows :

SEC. 1. Section one of Chapter twenty-two of the General Statutes is hereby amended so as to read as follows :

The Governor shall annually nominate, and by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, shall appoint a Board of Education, consisting of six persons, two of whom shall be residents of each congressional district, and three of whom at least, shall be practical

educators, and the Governor of the State for the time being, shall be ex-officio, a member of said Board.

SEC. 2. This act shall take effect from its passage.

Approved, Nov. 18, 1866.

By this law, and the appointments under it, the Board was increased from five to seven members, and two of the old members were exchanged for four new ones.

The law authorizing a revision of the list of school books is as follows :

It is hereby enacted, &c.

SEC. 1. The list of grammars, geographies, arithmetics, readers and spellers, which have been selected by the Board of Education under the act of the Legislature, approved November 23, 1858, to be used in the school districts of this State, with such limitations of text books, in each of said branches, as the said Board have seen fit to prescribe under said act, such selection having been made prior to the first day of January, 1859, and having been published in all the newspapers in the State, in the month of January, 1859, and also inserted in each school register, and also the Geography and History of Vermont, selected by the Board of Education, under the act approved November 29, 1862, shall be and remain authoritative and binding upon the Board of Education, Superintendents and teachers, until November 1, 1868, and teachers and superintendents shall recommend for use in the district schools, as new books shall become necessary for instruction in the branches named, no other than the books included in said list so established.

SEC. 2. The Board of Education are hereby authorized, and it is made their duty, on or before July 1, 1867, and on or before said date in every fifth year thereafter, to select a list of such grammars, geographies, arithmetics, histories of this State and the United States, philosophies, algebras, readers and spellers, not exceeding one book of a kind in each branch, as they shall deem best suited for instruction and use in the district schools of this State, in each of said branches ; and shall cause the list so selected to be published in all the newspapers published in the State, during the month of January next following the making of such selection ; and also to be inserted in each school register issued after one year from the making of such selection ; which list so selected shall be and remain authoritative and binding upon the Board of Education, superintendents and teachers, for and during five years from and after November 1, 1868, and each five years thereafter ; and superintendents and teachers shall recommend for use in the district schools, as new books shall become necessary for instruction in the branches named, no other than the books included in said list so selected and published.

SEC. 3. The authority herein granted for the revision of the list of school books, is hereby so limited that the Board of Education

shall not at any revision after 1868, cause to be changed the same kind of book oftener than once in five years ; and when any change of books is contemplated by the said Board under the provisions of this act, they shall request the prominent teachers throughout the State, to examine the different text books in the branches under consideration, and to furnish to the Board their opinion in writing ; and when any change is recommended by the Board, they shall in their next annual report after such recommendation, publish the reasons which governed their action, together with such opinions of teachers as shall have [been] furnished them as herein provided.

SEC. 4. If at any time the publishers of any of the text books recommended by the said Board shall charge an exorbitant price therefor, or for any cause any of such books shall fail to accomplish the end for which they were recommended, it shall be the duty of the said Board to report, through the Governor to the Legislature, such facts, recommending such action thereon as in their judgment is required.

SEC. 5. When any change is recommended by the board as herein provided, it shall be only a gradual change, not involving any extra expense to the pupils of the Schools of the State, and the direction given by the Board shall be, that new books hereafter purchased, as new classes are formed, shall be those by them selected and prescribed.

SEC. 6. Whenever an exchange of books shall be made, under the provisions of this act, it shall be upon the conditions entered in to with the publishers of any new books adopted that they shall receive all the books in the hands of book dealers in this State, in good condition, discontinued by the Board of Education, and shall allow to the dealers the full trade value therefor, and shall receive all the books in the hands of families or scholars in this State, discontinued by the Board of Education, in exchange for the new books ordered of the same class, allowing therefor the true value of the same, according as they have or have not been used.

Approved November 19, 1866.

Certain reflections will occur to the minds of all upon inspection of these acts, in connection with the known indications of excitement existing.

First. That it is remarkable that a matter so entirely within the legitimate functions of the regularly constituted educational agencies of the State should have caused the bringing together of so large and active a lobby, and so intense an excitement, if the main solicitude were for the welfare of the schools.

Second. That it was most manifestly the intention of the Legislature to cause the result of the revision to be as inexpensive as possible, and to conform to the wishes, and accord with the views, of the practical teachers of the State.

Third. That the previous Board of Education had, before the passage of the law, taken measures to ascertain the wishes and opinions of eminent practical teachers as preparatory to any revision.

As pertaining to the prescribed revision, the Board of Education again met in December, and appointed a time for a future meeting to assemble to perfect the revision. They also appointed three committees, of two practical teachers each, eminent in their own section and throughout the State, and referred the various topics to them, as follows:—

Mathematics, including Arithmetic and Algebra, were referred to Messrs. Judah Dana, Principal of Rutland Union School, and L. F. Ward, Principal of Bellows Falls High School.

Readers, Spellers and Grammars, were referred to Messrs. B. F. Bingham, Principal of Brattleboro High School, and C. D. Mead, Principal of Swanton High School.

Geographies, Histories and Philosophies were referred to Messrs. J. S. Cilley, Principal of Williston Academy, and S. H. Pearl, Principal of Lamoille Co. Grammar School.

These gentlemen were then requested, by resolution, to examine, with care, the text-books extant in reference to the classes of topics intrusted to them, and report to the Board, through the Secretary, as early as Feb. 10, A. D. 1867, such as in their opinion are the best, rendering their opinions in writing.

The Board then having appointed the 18th day of February as the day for the revision of the list of text-books, adjourned.

In due time the opinions in writing of Messrs. Cilley, Pearl, Dana, and Ward were received, Messrs. Mead and Bingham reserving their replies, intimating their desire, if permitted, to attend the meeting of the Board, and hearing any showing that might there be made. Previous to the February meeting, I was directed by the Governor to invite all the members of the committees of teachers to be present with the Board, at the meeting of February 18th.

On the 18th February, the Board of Education again assembled, and taking up the work assigned, gave ample opportunity for all who wished, to be heard in regard to the merits of their books, giving Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday till noon to the hearings from publishers and their agents,—giving Thursday afternoon to the reports of committees, and deciding the matter before Friday noon.

The list of books selected by the Board, as published under their direction, is as follows:—

AUTHORIZED LIST OF SCHOOL BOOKS.

The Board of Education, at its recent meeting at Waterbury, selected and authorized the list of text-books, given below. The text-books now in use remain binding upon superintendents and teachers until Nov. 1, 1868. The new list becomes binding upon the Board of Education, superintendents and teachers from and after that date:

Authorized List of School Text-Books Selected for the Schools of Vermont, by the Vermont Board of Education, Feb. 18, 19, 20, 21, and 22, A. D., 1867.

SPELLERS.

Progressive Speller by *Town & Holbrook.*

READERS.

Progressive Series of Readers, excluding the Intermediate Readers, by *Town & Holbrook.* Hillard's Sixth Reader, *Geo. S. Hillard.*

GRAMMARS.

Tower's Elements of Grammar. *Norton's, Weld & Quackenbos.*

GEOGRAPHIES.

Mitchell's First Lessons.

" Primary.

" Intermediate.

Montieth's Physical and Astronomical.

Guyot's Common School Geography and Wall Maps.

ARITHMETICS.

Greenleaf's New Primary.

" " Intellectual.

" " Practical.

Walton's Arithmetical Cards and Keys, for Common Schools.

Davies' University Arithmetic for High and Normal Schools only.

WRITING BOOKS.

Payson, Dunton & Scribner's Series.

ALGEBRA.

Greenleaf's New Elementary Algebra.

PHILOSOPHY.

Quackenbos's Philosophy.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY OF VERMONT.

Hall's Geography and History of Vermont.

HISTORY OF UNITED STATES.

Lossing's Common School History of United States.

The above is a correct copy of the list as selected by the Board.

J. S. ADAMS, Secretary.

Such was the authentic list of books selected by the Board of Education, and, of course selected in good faith and in the exercise of their best judgment.

The State had a right to their best judgment, and although the Board did not do me the honor to ask my opinion, and generally rejected every book except one which I advocated, and adopted every one which I opposed when I ventured, (the majority of the Board being new members, and I having been more than ten years in the work,) to obtrude my views—still, were the selection a finality, or intended to be so, without recourse, I should say nothing more about the list. But by the terms of the law under which the selection was made, it is rather singularly, but very precisely, provided that the new list shall not take effect till November first, A. D. 1868, or in other words, until the Legislature shall have had opportunity at two several sessions to correct any deficiencies of the list or make such additions as will better adapt it to the wants of the schools, and make it conform to the requirements of public opinion.

But the State, having given me their confidence in my present connection, has also a right to my opinion of the merits of the list as selected, and as I cannot conscientiously advocate the selection made as a good one, I will briefly state the more prominent objections to it.

But before doing this, it is well to call attention to the great importance of a right selection of school text-books. In the first place, then, if the selection finally settled upon is a reasonably satisfactory one, it is so probable as almost to be certain, that although the law only gives binding force to the list for five years after Nov. 1, 1868, still the books selected will be allowed to retain their place for ten years at least.

In the second place, till the teachers of our Public Schools shall have brought to bear in their instruction a far greater degree of independence and original force than is displayed at present, the character, intellectual and moral, of the Vermont of the next generation is more dependent upon the character of their school books, than upon any other single source of influence.

Hence the commanding importance of a proper selection of books, that certainly for five, and probably for ten years, will inform the minds, stir the hearts, and fill the souls of one hundred thousand children, and thereby enable them to redeem our pledges to the future, and avoid our errors, and become stronger, wiser, purer and better than we have strength to be, or be dwarfed and belittled forever—degenerate sons of a not too thoughtful and patriotic ancestry. And, in discussing this matter, I shall frankly state my own views and opinions, and do it from a binding sense of my personal and official duty to the interests which, for so long, have been partially in my charge, and not from any personal feeling that I may be supposed to entertain.

I am aware that my public and hearty denunciation of the evil effects upon our common schools of the unauthorized use of Greenleaf's Higher Arithmetic, and my equally public commendation of Guyot's

Geographies and Willson's Readers, have aroused the hostility of certain publishers, and that reports derogatory to my official and personal character have, in an under-hand way, been circulated. I have been informed that,—to use the language of a certain circular, that will be alluded to presently,—“certain educational gentlemen, and those high in authority,” have not only accused me of corruption, but have stated the precise sum which I am reported to have received for my corrupt services. I mention these facts simply that I may not be supposed to be unaware of their existence. The eleven years of service which I have rendered in the cause of education will best furnish such vindication as is needed.

But before proceeding with the objections alluded to, I will call attention to the Reports of the teachers, which are required by the law to be published.

The reports of the various Teachers, called to advise with the Board, were as follows :

Report of J. S. Cilley, Principal of Williston Academy.

WILLISTON, February 9th, 1867.

To the Vermont Board of Education :—

GENTLEMEN—In accordance with your request, as communicated to me by your Secretary, J. S. Adams, Esq., I have devoted what time I could possibly give, to the examination of text-books on the History of the United States, Geography, and Natural Philosophy ; and hereby report to you my opinions, resulting from that examination.

Authors on the History of the United States, who are at all competent to their work, must necessarily agree in respect to the great and important events in that history, and in the time and order of their occurrence. But though the facts of history remain the same, there may be very great differences in the manner of relating them, and choice should be made, it seems to me, of that author whose statements are best calculated to give a full and clear idea of the subject, and whose style is, at the same time, the most simple, animated, attractive, and interesting. With this view of the matter, having examined Goodrich, Willson, Lossing, and Quackenboss, I give my voice, first, in favor of the last named, and, secondly, in favor of Lossing. Says Quackenboss, in his preface, “The author has aimed to be *simple*, that youth of lower as well as advanced classes may understand him ; *clear*, that no indistinct or erroneous impressions may be conveyed ; *accurate* in the recital of facts : and interesting as regards both matter and style.”

I think the aim of the author has been fully met, and that his work will *as fully* meet the wants of our Public Schools. The book is well bound ; the paper, good ; the type, large and clear ; and the maps and illustrations are all that is necessary in that direction.

I regard Lossing's Common School History of the United States as a very good book, and in some respects, perhaps, equal in merit with Quackenboss ; but the exceeding brevity of his statements of the facts of history is, in my mind, a very serious objection to Lossing. Let the children of Vermont have a History of their country sufficiently full to give them a thorough knowledge of her glorious career, and then, time enough to learn it.

The publishers of Lossing are entitled to very great commendation for presenting to the country a book excellent in material, beautiful in appearance, and very interesting in its maps and pictorial illustrations.

In regard to works on Geography, I have no second choice, and have but one

opinion to give. To this most interesting and important branch of study, pupils often turn with indifference, and almost with loathing, because of the character of the books they use; and teachers, in their efforts to interest and instruct, have long and earnestly wished for means adequate to the work in hand. "Geography is a description of the earth's surface and its inhabitants," says the author, and giving a mass of dry, often, unimportant, disconnected, unrelated facts concerning land and water, mountain and valley, man and his occupations, civilization and savage life, government and religion, the work is done—the Geography is written. The great and glorious facts in regard to the structure of the beautiful world we tread,—the relation of cause and effect in the phenomena of air, earth and sea,—facts and phenomena whose contemplation can but stir, exalt, and ennoble the soul, are but very little considered by those whose works on Geography have been placed in the hands of pupils in our Common Schools. But the darkness is past, and light is sprung up. It is permitted Prof. Guyot to exclaim with triumph and exultation, "Eureka!" for he has found it—a new and living way to teach Geography.

I have examined with very great interest the first two books in his Geographical series, and find in them new light for the pupil, wisdom for the teacher, and joy for all. Prof. Guyot shows himself a master, imparting knowledge with such life, in a way so natural and philosophical, in style so simple, and yet so noble, that the child, while *interested*, may *understand*; and the strong man, *delighted*, may find ample scope for the exercise of all his powers. The examination of his Wall Maps,—indispensable in the successful study of his works,—has awakened in my own mind an interest in the study which I have not felt for years, and I really look forward to my next term of school, when I intend to teach Geography by the use of his books and maps, with hope of success I have never yet realized.

If my advice shall have influence at all in the selection of books for the schools of the State, I wish it may influence only as shall be for the highest good of all concerned; and, with my views of the importance of proper action in this matter, I most earnestly advise the selection of Guyot's, as the best text-book on Geography for the Schools of Vermont; and I would express the hope that the day is not far distant when Guyot's Maps shall hang upon the walls of our school-houses, and his books shall be indeed the teacher's guide, and the pupil's welcome and efficient help.

Of text-books on Natural Philosophy, I will only say, that with some degree of care I have examined those by Hooker, Wells, and Quackenboss, all of which I esteem good, and worthy of commendation. Hooker's manner of treatment is, in my opinion, the best, as the lecture style is superior to the method of instruction by question and answer, the *basis* of almost all books designed for use in the school-room. Hooker's work, though not so extended as others, is, perhaps, enough so for use in Common Schools. But for full and extended treatment of the subject, preference must be given to Wells or Quackenboss, and especially to the latter. Allow me to say that I deem Wells' Science of Common Things, a good book for the use of our schools.

And now, Gentlemen, having performed the duty assigned me as well as I could under the circumstances, I respectfully submit this report.

Truly yours,

J. S. CILLEY.

Report of S. H. Pearl, Principal of Lamoyille County Grammar School.

JOHNSON, Vt., February 8th, 1867.

J. S. ADAMS, Secretary of the Board of Education:—

Dear Sir,—Having to the best of my ability performed the duties assigned me by the State Board of Education, in examining Philosophies, Histories and Geographies, with reference to a selection of text-books in the same,

suitable for introduction into the Common Schools of the State, I would respectfully submit the following report:

1st. PHILOSOPHY. In this department, I have received and examined three works, viz., those of Wells, Quackenboss, and Hooker. The first and second I have put to the practical test of the school-room, and can therefore give you the results of my own experience. The first, Wells' Philosophy, contains about 433 pages of matter, with 275 cuts; the second, Quackenboss', 400, and 335 cuts; thus having 83 pages of matter and 40 cuts less than the former. Both works are quite extensive, half of each, probably, being printed in fine type with questions upon each page. After a fair trial of Wells, I laid it aside and took Quackenboss, and have since used it, with the belief that it was better adapted to the wants of my classes than Wells. The cuts are reproduced in the back part of the work, which has been found to be very convenient in recitation, especially when there was not time to use apparatus, or a lack of it to illustrate the points under discussion. Problems in connection with each chapter, requiring a practical application of the principles developed, form a very interesting feature of the work.

But I have thought that, perhaps, both of these works were too extensive and difficult for most classes in Common Schools, and that, though they may be well adapted to the wants of more advanced classes, yet a *simpler, briefer*, and more *elementary* work, would better answer the purpose of a common-school text-book.

Such, in my opinion, is the Philosophy of Hooker. It contains about 308 pages of matter, besides 19 pages of questions arranged separately, and 289 cuts. Thus it has, including questions, 63 pages and 46 cuts less than Quackenboss, and 106 pages and 86 cuts less than Wells. It is the work of an eminent scholar and philosopher; is written in the *lecture style*, which renders it more readable than if presented in the *formal statement style*; its presentation of principles is clear, the illustrations numerous and familiar; it conforms to the latest discoveries in the science; it does not attempt to introduce subjects belonging to kindred sciences; the work is finely executed, the type large, clear, and all of a size; and I think it will be found sufficiently minute for a common-school text-book. In some respects I should prefer a work still more elementary than this, but nothing of that kind having been presented, I recommend Hooker's Philosophy, as better adapted to the wants of our Common Schools than either of the other works submitted to my inspection, and I advise the adoption of the same as a text-book in this subject by the Board of Education.

2d. HISTORY. In this subject I have received and examined but three works, viz.: those of Willson, Quackenboss, and Lossing. Willson contains 422 pages of History, with questions and dates in the margin, about 70 maps and cuts, geographical and historical foot notes, and the Constitution of the United States with explanatory notes, making in all 447 pages of matter. Quackenboss has 404 pages of History, with questions at the bottom of the page, 97 maps and cuts, the Declaration of Independence and signers thereof, the Constitution of the United States, and a Chronological Record of important events, embracing in all 582 pages. Lossing contains 302 pages of History, with foot notes and questions at the bottom of the page, over 200 illustrations, the Constitution of the United States, with notes, review questions, the Declaration of Independence with biographical table of the signers, biographical sketches of the Continental Congress and of the Presidents of the United States, and a chronological table, amounting in all to 374 pages.

I have examined these books with considerable care, comparing topic with topic, and although all the works are very good, each having, perhaps, some especially good qualities to recommend it, yet, after the examination I have made, I should prefer Lossing's Common School History, for the following reasons, viz: it is briefer, and could therefore be more easily mastered in the District School; it is more compact, giving more matter in less space; it is finely executed; it is the work of an eminent historian, whose fidelity and ability are well known to the world; and last, but not least, I understand it will be considerably cheaper than either of the other works.

Quackenbos and Lossing each have a primary history. I have not examined these very carefully, but if one of them were to be adopted, I think I should prefer Lossing's for reasons similar to those given above.

3d. GEOGRAPHIES. Upon this subject I do not feel fully prepared to make a report. I have received seven works from four different authors since the Institute at Wolcott, and having been quite unwell for the past few days, I have not been able to examine them. Also, I have just received a letter from a member of the Board, suggesting the desirability of comparing views at Waterbury, and, if possible, of presenting a conjoint report to the Board on this very subject. Should this be done, no report on Geographies will now be necessary.

I would say, however, that of the works presented early in the winter, viz: Guyot's, Mitchell's, Cornell's, and Colton's, I should much prefer Guyot's. Of the works lately received, I can say that I like Warren's very well, and also, that I am well pleased with some of the features of Montielh.

I have, as yet, seen no Primary that satisfies me;—some appearing to be too difficult, others too imaginary, and others still, too much in the old beaten track of Geographies of the past.

Hoping that the Committee may be able to arrange this matter in a satisfactory manner, when they meet, and thus facilitate the action of the Board, I would most respectfully submit what I have accomplished.

Yours, most respectfully and truly,
S. H. PEARL.

Report of Judah Dana, Principal of Rutland High School.

RUTLAND, Vt., Feb. 14, 1867.

Hon. J. S. ADAMS:—

Dear Sir,—I received a communication from you some weeks ago, saying that the Board of Education, in conformity to an act of the Legislature, requiring them to consult "prominent teachers" in the State, in regard to a change of text books for use in the Common Schools, &c., had made choice of myself with others to recommend text books on the subject of Mathematics, to the Board. I feel that I have done wrong in not replying sooner, but trust that a change of situation and a multiplicity of duties in a new sphere of action, will be sufficient apology, as I feel confident that the cause of Education will receive no detriment from my delay.

While I feel truly grateful to the Board for the confidence and regard which they have manifested for me, I will say that I have too great a regard for, and confidence in *them*, to think that they *need* the advice of *any* of the "*prominent teachers*," in making their decisions on text books, and that confidence will prohibit my imposing my opinion at any length upon them; yet I can hardly forbear saying, that last September, previous to the meeting of the Legislature, and the agitations of change in books, I had examined all the Arithmetics in my reach, and expressed a preference for Eaton's. Since then I have examined Greenleaf's (?) New Practical, Walton's and Quackenbos', and can see no reason for changing my previously expressed opinion; and I will now add, that the use of Eaton's the present winter has rather strengthened that preference than otherwise.

In regard to Algebras, I have seen but two or three. Of two of these, viz: Greenleaf's and Robinson's, my mind leans strongly towards Robinson's, as I do not know that he sells as many keys (which I detest,) as Algebras.

Respectfully yours,
JUDAH DANA.

Report of L. F. Ward, Principal of Bellows Falls High School.

BElLOWS FALLS, Vt., Feb. 11th, 1867.

J. S. ADAMS, Secretary of Board of Education, Vt.,—

Dear Sir,—I have made an examination of various Text Books in **Arithmetics and Algebra**, according to your request, particularly **Greenleaf's Old Series**, **Greenleaf's Practical**, **Quackenbos'**, **Walton's**, **Eaton's**, **Davies' Arithmetics**, with various **Algebras**. I am unable to present my preference with the reasons therefor, as you desire, without more time and labor than I can just now spare, provided I should do justice to this so important subject.

If, however, it comes within the scope of the Board of Education to accept Text Books, with terms of acceptance attached, I would suggest that no one of these books be received without a faithful revision made, and thorough demonstration introduced and betterments made in the following essential parts of Arithmetic, in which they all lack much: 1st, in Numeration of Integers and of Decimal Fractions; 2d, In the statement of the steps and logical deduction, rather than assumption of said steps in the fundamental operations of Arithmetic; 3d, In rigid and careful Analysis of all examples and processes; 4th, In forms for disciplining the minds of scholars easily managed by teachers.

The great importance of the case urges me, if my health should permit, to be present with you at your meeting, and explain the above suggestions fully, as without special pointing out, my idea of revision would not be understood.

It may be just to say that in the main the Analysis of Examples in "**Greenleaf's Practical**" is very good, but in the other points which I have suggested for revision, I find it as the rest.

I am, most truly yours,

L. F. WARD.

Report of C. D. Mead, Principal of Swanton Academy.

WATERBURY, Feb. 20, 1867.

In my opinion the Schools of Vermont would do best, to use **Willson's Readers** from the First to the Fourth inclusive, and for a higher work, **Hillard's Sixth**.

I have no decided preference for any particular Grammar.

Allow me to say that I have but partially examined **Parker and Watson's series**, and think it a good one.

C. D. MEAD.

Report of B. F. Bingham, Principal of Brattleboro' High School.

Agreeably to your request, I hereby suggest certain books for our Schools: **Readers**—**Willson's** 1st, 2d and 3d; **Sargent's** 4th and 5th; and for some of our higher classes, **Hillard's** 6th.

Spellers—**Sanborn's Union**.

Grammars—**Tower's Elements**.

I think well of the "**Union**" and "**National Fifth Readers**"—have not seen the last till I came here.

B. F. BINGHAM.

Waterbury, Feb. 20.

The main objections to the selected list and the method of making it are as follows:

First—The selection was made with such haste as utterly to preclude all possibility of that calm and considerate attention due to the importance of the subject, and even to propriety.

It appears from the Records, that the Board assembled on the evening of Monday, Feb. 18; began on Tuesday morning to hear from the great crowd of publishers and agents present, whatever they might choose to offer in regard to the merits of the books they represented. These hearings continued through the day and evening of Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday till noon. The afternoon of Thursday was given to hearing the reports of Committees of Teachers. In the evening of Thursday, the Board disposed of the selections of Arithmetics, Algebras, Geographies, Philosophies, Grammars, Histories of the United States, and History and Geography of Vermont, and adjourned to meet at seven o'clock in the morning of Friday. In a session of not more than an hour, before breakfast, on Friday, the Readers and Spellers were disposed of, although a formal adjournment to the forenoon, in deference to a remonstrance on the score of propriety, was made. Thus it will be seen that less than six hours was in fact given to so grave a matter in which to decide in regard to so many topics and such a mass of books.

To suppose that so many men, upon so difficult a subject, and one so proverbially prolific of differences of opinion, could in so short a time reconcile all diversities of judgment, clear away all misunderstandings and differences of views, and all with that freedom of discussion, comparison of convictions, and that calm and unprejudiced consideration eminently due to the occasion, is simply preposterous.

Second—The circumstances attending the decision, as well as those preceding and following it, were of such a nature as to indicate a prejudgment of the subject, so strongly, as to detract largely from the weight that otherwise would have attached to such decisions.

1st, At the time of the Waterbury meeting, and before the arrival of all the members of the Board, it was currently reported and seemed to be generally believed among the crowd of interested men, that a meeting or other arrangement had occurred, by which a majority of the Board had, previous to the time of the meeting of the Board, agreed upon the leading features—Arithmetics, Geographies and Readers of the list—to be formally adopted. This was so stated in the office of the Hotel, in the presence of several auditors.

2d, And this feeling was strengthened by the palpable haste with which the formal decision was hurried through. Agents and publishers were too conversant with the inherent difficulties of such a decision readily to suppose that a deliberate judgment could be formed after so extended a hearing, by so many men in so short a time.

3d, Mr. Pearl states in his report, that he received an invitation to make a joint report on Geographies, rather than give an independent opinion, as required by law, and by the invitation extended.

Mr. Cilley, although it is not mentioned in his report, received a similar invitation in regard to his report on Geographies, but declined, having already sent his report to me.

4th, The gentlemen reported to have agreed beforehand upon a list, voted uniformly together throughout.

5th, At the special session of the Legislature, after the publication of the list selected, in which Guyot's Geographies were reported to be adopted generally for all the Schools, most of the gentlemen referred to being at Montpelier, and others being invited by the agent of Mitchell's Geographies, under an engagement to pay their expenses, held a meeting, without any notice to the Secretary, and endeavored to take such action as to make it appear that Guyot's Geographies were only adopted for Graded, High and Normal Schools, until significantly informed that such or indeed any action, even by a majority, would avail nothing, as no meeting of the Board was valid unless called by the Governor through the Secretary.

6th, At the meeting of the Board, held at Bristol, to hear and adopt the report of the Board, and to locate a Normal School for the First District, when the report was read, preparatory to its adoption, stating Guyot's Geographies to have been adopted for Graded and High Schools, Mr. Conant objecting, the debate went on till the attention of the citizens in the Church was excited, and several expressed surprise, saying they supposed the selection of books *finished*, and until the Secretary remarked that, that part of the report was in accordance neither with the facts nor the record; and that, having once published the result under the direction of the Board and in accordance with the facts, he must decline in any such way to be put in a false position.

Third, The method pursued with the hearings, so far as the teachers invited to advise with the Board were concerned, could not be properly called courteous, and was hardly fair in any sense of the word. By direction of the Governor, these gentlemen,—all of them eminent teachers, of whom the State need not be ashamed,—had been invited to attend the meeting of the Board, and hear what was to be said in favor of the various books. All had come except Mr. Dana; all had spent much time in doing, free of charge, the work intrusted to them; deeply interested personally and professionally in the selection of the books which they with others were to use, they came up at their own expense, and at great loss of time. At noon of Thursday the Committees of Teachers desired to know if they would be allowed to attend and hear the deliberations of the Board, and upon my asking the question of the Board, they desired me to inform the teachers, that the deliberations of the Board would be in private. Accordingly Messrs. Mead, Bingham and Cilley left in the noon train. After these gentlemen had left, the Board re-assembled, and, as the record says—within two hours after the teachers who had gone had been informed under the direction of the Board that they could not be permitted to be present—"Upon motion, it was determined to hear the reports of the "practical teachers who had been invited to assist by advising with the "Board, with such comments as they choose to add thereto; and that "those gentlemen be invited to remain with the Board during their de-

"liberations. But upon inquiring it was found that Messrs. Cilley, Mead and Bingham, understanding from the previous resolution of the Board, that they would not be permitted to be present at the deliberations of the Board, had already returned home, and that only Messrs. Ward and Pearl remained, who, according to the resolution, were invited and came into the meeting of the Board."

"Upon motion, Mr. L. F. Ward was then invited to read his report upon mathematics, and read his report, as follows :"

[Here follows the Report before quoted.]

"Upon motion, after reading his report, Mr. Ward, upon the invitation of the Board, proceeded at length to give his views of the necessary characteristics of a good text-book in Arithmetic and the true wants of the Schools; and therefor received the thanks of the Board."

It is not very wonderful that teachers should feel agrieved and indignant, and as some of them have expressed it, insulted, by such treatment. I must confess to an entire absence of all pride in being thus made the instrument of extending such courtesy to teachers as eminent as devoted to their calling.

It was an unfortunate coincidence, if accidental, that eminent teachers who opposed Greenleaf and the Progressive Readers, should have been invited to leave, and the only teacher in the whole number not unfavorable to those books, should have been invited to attend and take part in the deliberations of the Board.

The result is, as might have been expected, teachers generally will feel inclined, as many now do, to resent what was very like a premeditated slight to their profession, and will not naturally be disposed to favor a list thus selected; and thus it will be very difficult to secure the uniformity intended, and at least as difficult to avoid the imputation of prejudice, which, from the circumstances, seems inevitable.

Fourth. The selection of books, under authority of a law that expressly required the opinions of eminent practical teachers to be taken on the subject, was consummated by the votes of five men who uniformly voted together, three of whom were new members of the Board, in the absence of Gov. Dillingham, and so far as Readers, Arithmetics and a portion of Geographies were concerned, in direct opposition to the advice of most of the teachers consulted, and in some cases in opposition to the advice of all of them—against the advice of Mr. Conant, a teacher all his life, and an instructor in the Institutes continually from the beginning; and against the earnest advice of the Secretary of the Board, who for more than ten years had been intimately connected with the Schools; and lastly, in defiance, as far as Readers and Arithmetics go, to the known public sentiment of the State.

It is hardly necessary to add that a list which lacks the most essential elements of unanimous approval by Board and Secretary; accordance with the pronounced and well-known popular demand, and unnecessarily expensive from changing books on the previous list for those

that are no better, and in opposition to the wishes and expectations of the great body of the teachers, will be with great difficulty sustained.

Fifth. It may be said with regard to the Readers, that it was particularly with reference to them and the Arithmetics, that the previous Board in their report of 1866, say that "they are advised from all parts of the State, that there is general dissatisfaction with these books, and a strong desire for a change." The Progressive Readers were largely in the Schools before the previous authentic list was constructed, and were included in that list mainly on that account, as appears from the former Reports. Having thus been in constant and universal use for ten years, pupils and teachers had become tired of them and longed for something new and fresh. This disposition was notorious, and known to be general. At the time of the selection, many series of Readers were brought to the attention of the Board, several of them equally as good as the Progressive. For one or two years, supposing a change of Readers probable, and casting about for what I considered the best for our Schools, I found Wilson's Readers in every other respect as good as any, and in addition to their rhetorical matter, containing throughout the series, excellent and entertaining matter, well adapted to kindle in the minds of pupils an interest in all the physical sciences—in Botany, Geology, Chemistry, Natural Philosophy, Natural History, &c. Persuaded that the use of these books in our schools would tend strongly to spread a taste for and love of science throughout the community, and thus largely contribute to the elevation and purification of the character of the youth of the State; recognizing the utter absence of sound knowledge upon these subjects among the young as one of the startling weaknesses of our methods of instruction, and believing that the right use of new books so characterized, would, by inducing habits of careful and thoughtful reading, powerfully counteract the widely prevalent tendency to superficiality, I had taken these books for some three years to the Institutes, commended them to the notice of the teachers, and a strong feeling in their favor had been created. They had been used in the families and Schools, and given good satisfaction. I was quite confident that some consideration could be secured for these books from the Board.

But less than two hours was given by the Board to the consideration of Readers—the most important topic, beyond comparison, before them, and they seemed exceedingly impatient of all discussion, whatever. When it became evident that a majority of the Board were in favor of retaining the present Readers, it was urged that scholars and teachers were all tired of them, and desired new books. But it was replied that the books were enlarged and amended. The extent and character of these improvements is best known by the following extract from the preface to the Fourth Reader, a book of 432 pages. The authors say: "This revised and enlarged edition, containing sixty-two pages of new and peculiarly appropriate lessons, embraces every variety of rhetori-

"cal exercises required in the school room; but no changes have been made that will *prevent the two editions from being used in the same class* until the lessons of the old are exhausted."

So the old book with the new addendum, will cost the child as much as an entirely new one, and be an old one after all.

In the course of the previous hearing, a printed form of petition, largely signed, and extending some rods in length, was paraded with great solemnity before the Board; and in forming a decision this being alluded to, the attention of the Board was called to the fact that the Publisher of the Readers had for several months advertised in the State newspapers for these signatures. Their attention was asked to the form of the petition, printed as follows:

"To the Board of Education of the State of Vermont:

"The undersigned, residents of the Town of _____,
County of _____, State of Vermont,

"Respectfully request the Board of Education to re-adopt the
"Progressive Series of Text Books, by Salem Town, L.L. D., and
"Nelson Holbrook, A. M.

"This series, so largely and so lately introduced into our Schools, is
"giving entire satisfaction. In moral tone, excellence of selections, and
"practical illustrations, it is all we could desire.

"Teachers and Committees will please indicate their office after signature."

The Board was reminded of the fact that the above was only the *public* circular, and that in many cases it had been accompanied by a private circular, so grossly squinting at corruption that it had in many instances been indignantly forwarded to the Secretary or to members of the Board, with comments showing that some of our teachers and Superintendents fully appreciated it.

The following is a copy of one of those circulars so sent to me, with comments:

"DEAR SIR:

"I send you the enclosed, as one coming in contact
"with those interested in educational matters, residing in your town.
"The short time allowed me for obtaining the signatures of those using
"the series referred to, oblige me to ask the favor through those who
"can soonest accomplish the object. It may not be known that an
"effort is being made to bring inferior and more expensive books to the
"notice of the Board of Education, incurring great expense to the State,
"and displacing thereby a series of books approved by all fair and honest individuals.

"The Board, however, is composed of intelligent and responsible
"men, and while they will be governed by the merits of every book
"selected, it is important that the names of leading teachers and educational men and women should be obtained, showing no desire to
"change Reading Books, if they are satisfied with the present excellent

"series in use—the largest, the cheapest, and the latest revision of any extant.

"To accomplish this object, it may require a little time and trouble on your part. In return for your kindness in complying with my request, I will, on receipt of the enclosed, bearing the names of as many of the leading teachers, members of the school committee, and such educational persons of your town as will also favor me with their names, remit you, cheerfully, such a sum as you may suggest as an equivalent for your kindness.

"The circular sent for signatures should not be posted in any public place, or *allowed to go out of your possession*, except to authorized parties with whom you may leave it to obtain signatures; and when completed, it should be mailed to my address, if possible, within two weeks of its receipt on your part.

"The importance of the work concerns the entire educational interests of your State; and the carrying out of the same is by request of several leading educational gentlemen, and those high in authority, connected with the schools.

"I should be glad to receive a reply to this communication, acknowledging its receipt, and your willingness to co-operate in the work.

"OLIVER ELLSWORTH,

"Boston, Dec. 20, 1866.

Publisher."

Upon the back of one of the above circulars are the following comments, by Rev. C. E. Ferrin, one of our Town Superintendents:

"Messrs. Adams and Board of Education:

"What I have to say on the subject of this circular, more properly belongs to you than to Mr. Ellsworth. It is, that the subject of readers—the reading which the children of Vermont shall become most familiar with, and which will do much to form their taste for reading, their style of speaking and writing, their moral and intellectual muscle, and, to an extent, their religious views and character,—is a matter of large importance. To put it into the market, to control it by profit and loss counted in dollars and cents, to allow it to be decided in any degree, or its *decision to be influenced in any degree by the interest of a Publisher*, or by the competition of publishers, seems to me *abominable*. I shall look to you instead of Mr. Ellsworth for my pay for writing this, and getting my friend Leavenworth to sign it.

"C. E. FERRIN.

"P. S.—Gentlemen of the Board: If you are not qualified to decide the questions assigned you by law, without petitions and help from the publishers of books, we request you to resign, and permit others to be appointed who are."

Here is the endorsement of Mr. Leavenworth, Principal of Hinesburgh Academy, and his two assistants:

" HINESBURGH ACADEMY, January 10, 1867.

" We most heartily concur in the condemnation expressed by our Town Superintendent, Rev. C. E. Ferrin, of the attempt to influence the action of the Board of Education, in the selection of Readers for the use of the children and youth of our State, by means of the signatures of unsuspecting teachers and others, through the under-handed and contemptible efforts of the bought agents of Mr. Oliver Ellsworth.

" ABEL E. LEAVENWORTH,

" MARY E. G. LEAVENWORTH,

" M. G. MATHEWSON."

It was suggested to the Board that, having had the exclusive sale of Readers for ten years, Mr. Ellsworth could not complain of any change; that the new old Readers would cost as much as those equally good that were entirely new; and that the author of such a circular would have no reason to complain of any course that should be taken.

Then, after consuming less than one hour in making the decision, the Board by vote,—not unanimously, adopted the Progressive Readers, and Hillard's Sixth.

I then begged the Board, that they would allow teachers, who wished, to make the experiment of familiarizing the minds of classes with the elementary principles of science, by adding one or two of Willson's to the list; but could hardly obtain a hearing. Mr. Conant also joined in the request; but the Board were immovable, and proposed to adjourn finally. I then reminded the Board of the wide circulation of the corrupt circulars, and suggesting that the importance of a right selection of Readers was universally recognized, and that they had spent so little time in this matter, that the people would connect the circulars, the rejection of the advice of the teachers and the manifest haste together, and therefrom draw inferences of carelessness, or pre-judgment unfavorable to the Board and injurious to the cause of education.

Then a formal adjournment was taken to 10 o'clock in the forenoon—but, as I think, little further consideration was given the subject. (See notes 1 and 2.)

1. The character of the Willson Series of Readers is well indicated in the fact, that in our own Normal School, at Randolph, one of these Readers has been used as a class text-book in Botany, being considered, for instruction in that science within certain limits, preferable to most of the special text-books in that branch.

2. One of the arguments adduced by a legal member of the Board during the discussion in regard to Readers, was too peculiar to be utterly lost, and is embodied here for the edification, particularly, of my educational brethren. Thus ran the argument:

" Moral culture is the highest work of the teacher; and confessedly moral culture finds its best foundation in the Scriptures, as literally the revealed will of God. Whatever then in a Reader—with which, of course, every child using it must become very familiar—tends, even in a remote degree, to weaken the faith of our youth in the Scriptures, must be on that account exceedingly dangerous. Now the Bible states that Isaac was thirty years of age—a full-grown

"man, when Abraham, at the divine command, proposed to offer him up as a solemn sacrifice. But, [exhibiting a picture of the sacrifice from Willson's Third Reader, and with a look of holy horror,] see this picture! See Isaac bound on the altar, and evidently represented as a boy of not more than sixteen years of age. How can a child habitually contemplate such a gross misrepresentation of Bible truth, without shaking the foundations of his faith in the Scripture?"

Such was the tenor of the argument; it would be as difficult to give the words as to answer the argument.

Sixth, In regard to the Geographies, likewise, it may well be stated that the selection of Guyot's Geographies and Maps is most fortunate for our Schools. It has been noticeable in our Schools for many years, that their progress in geographical knowledge was much less than ought reasonably to be expected from the proportionate time and labor given to this branch. For many years, indeed from the very first of the Institutes, the tenor of the instruction given in the Institutes has been toward the adoption of a more rational and philosophical method of instruction, that should attract much more of attention towards Physical Geography, and make its prominent features the basis on which all other geographical facts could more rationally be made to rest. The undue attention given to trifling details, and the scanty allowance of Physical Geography, have been for years held up, in all our educational gatherings, as the prevailing defects of all our text books in Geography.

The appearance of Prof. Guyot's Geographies marks a grand step onward in the method of geographical instruction, and it is a proper occasion for satisfaction that they should have been adopted in the list of books. But it is also true that the use of these Geographies, so novel in character and involving the necessity of so much more life and effort on the part of the teacher, is in our Schools properly to be regarded, as the Board well say in their report, as "a matter of experiment." Other books, then, may be supposed to be necessary, for a time, although I have not a shadow of a doubt about the ultimate success of Guyot's Geographies. Why, then, should the Board strike from the list Cornell's Geographies and substitute Mitchell's and McNally's. The latter books, are in my opinion, not one jot better than the Cornell Series, and it seems injudicious to strike off books that are already in the Schools, and at great expense introduce others equally costly that are no better. In the judgment of the Board of Education by whom the first list was selected, composed of Messrs. Hall, Martin, Pease, Bradley and Redfield, whose judgment was worthy of respect, to say the least, Cornell's Geographies were selected as the best extant, while the Mitchell and McNally Series were already well known and in the Schools to some extent, and differing very little from the latest editions of the same books.

The Messrs. Appletons, the publishers of Cornell, had given most favorable terms for the introduction of their books when they were selected. Subsequently when a disposition to procure outline maps

began to manifest itself, that firm, while charging \$18, as their wholesale price, allowed them to teachers and Committees in our State at \$11. As they had been thus liberal to us at my request, I felt anxious that other things being equal, their books should remain in our schools. I had an interview with the firm in the Winter of 1865 and 1866—and told them that Prof. Guyot's methods would revolutionize the modes of geographical teaching—that the Cornell, like Mitchell's and Fitch and Colton's geographies, had far too much insignificant trash, and far too little Physical Geography. They informed me that a new and improved edition of Cornell, re-cast and thoroughly revised, would soon appear. And at the time of the selection, proof sheets of the new text soon to be completed, and of the new maps, more beautiful than any other presented, were exhibited. It seemed to me then, it seems now, not wise to make such an entire change. Cornell's Geographies would have done as good service as Mitchell's or McNally's for five years; by the time Guyot's Geographies would have been tolerably tested, and if as good as many expected, would soon obtain supremacy. If not satisfactory, they could have been superceded by others. The question of expense, though not the most important in connection with educational matters, is still of some importance. There were during by the last year 25,449 scholars studying Geography. Now the average cost of all grades of any one of the series of Geographies will not be less than eighty cents, which will make the cost of a new supply to exceed \$20,000. If any great good is to be gained by such change then it ought to be made—but in all their great features the books of Mitchell & McNally are no better than Cornell, except that in Mitchell's Geography an article on Vermont is promised from Mr. White. This would be a consideration of greater weight, did not the law require special instruction in the Geography and History of Vermont, from a book already selected and in use in our schools. I trust this unnecessary expense may be avoided, and Cornell's Geographies remain in the new as in the old list, with Guyot's Geographies added thereto.

Seventh, In reference to Arithmetics, I have to say in the first place that I regret that Warren Colburn's Intellectual Arithmetic should have been left entirely out of the list. I am not by any means alone in the opinion that this book is far superior to any other intellectual arithmetic extant.

Secondly, the selection of any Greenleaf's Arithmetic leaves the schools exposed to the same evil tendency in the future from which they have suffered in the past. Greenleaf's Higher Arithmetic, utterly unfit for the Common Ungraded Schools, but although never recommended for them, yet largely introduced, will still continue to exert an evil influence by leading thousands of scholars and teachers to neglect the elementary principles of fundamental arithmetic in their haste to seem to master the higher theories and more difficult propositions. I consider Greenleaf's Higher Arithmetic, however good they may be

in their legitimate sphere, to have been a curse to our common ungraded schools. The old Greenleaf Arithmetics are advocated by no one; and so long as new books must be procured, I think it would have been far better to have taken Walton, where arithmetical cards were adopted, or Eaton, or Robinson or Adam's Revised, in lieu of Greenleaf.

I cannot consent to close this, the last Report that I shall ever make, without attempting some expressions of gratitude for the kindness and courtesy I have received.

To the Town Superintendents who have so earnestly and cheerfully co-operated with me for so long a time:

To the teachers, earnest devoted, self-sacrificing as so many of them have been, always endeavoring to act the part of a friend and brother, it is only now, as I sever the connection between us, and recal the loving looks, the cordial greetings, the tearful eyes that I have so often beheld, that I realize how much the State of Vermont has owed to her noble teachers. Brothers and sisters all, may God bless you, and give support and strength to bear your heavy, weary, thankless, but glorious burthens.

To the people of the State who have always given me their respect and confidence, that have helped to alleviate the crushing sense of incompetency which for eleven years has haunted me like a ghost,—to all, I desire to return my heartfelt thanks.

J. S. ADAMS.

I recommend the following modifications of law :

1st. That Physical Geography, Literary Composition, and Book-keeping be added to the topics specified in the general law, in which instruction shall be required in all the common schools.

2d. That Vocal Music, Physiology and Drawing be taught in all the Public Schools of every grade, whenever the Prudential Committee, or the District by vote, shall so direct.

3d. That any town, at a town meeting legally warned for that purpose, may by a majority vote direct the abolition of all the school districts therein, and establish a method of disposition of existing school property.

4th. That all Prudential Committees of Districts, except in Union Districts, shall consist of three persons, to be elected at the next annual school meeting for one, two, or three years respectively, and thereafter, one member of such committee to be elected annually and to hold office for three years.

5th. That the law be so amended that no District shall receive any share of public money, unless there shall, during the year next preceding the distribution thereof, have been kept in such District a school for the term of four months sustained by other moneys than those which may have been drawn from the town treasury.

6th. That the compensation of the Secretary of the Board be increased, that he have an office in the State House, and attend the sessions of the Legislature.

7th. That assistance be given to the State Normal Schools.

8th. That some measure of intelligence be required in the future of all admitted to the right of suffrage.

9th. That examinations at the Institutes be held only in the first of the courses of study prescribed by the Board.

10th. That the authorized List of School books selected by the Board of Education in February, 1867, be so changed by direct act of the Legislature, as to substitute Willson's Readers for the Progressive Series—to substitute Colburn's Intellectual Arithmetic and Walton's Arithmetic for Greenleaf's Arithmetic—and to substitute Cornell's Geographies now in the schools with the improved edition for Mitchell's Geographies; or that at least, Willson's Readers, Colburn's and Walton's Arithmetics, and Cornell's Geographies, improved edition, be added to the present list.

REPORT OF THE NORMAL SCHOOLS.

Several weeks since I addressed a note to the Principals of the Normal Schools at Randolph and Johnson, desiring them to report the condition, prospects, and necessities of those schools.

The answers are so complete and compact that I insert them here without weakening them by any accompanying remarks of my own—fearing that such addition would weaken rather than strengthen the Reports.

But I cannot refrain from saying that we owe the present auspicious beginning of a State Normal School System more to Mr. Edward Conant than to any other man, or indeed to all others.

Hon. E. CONANT, Principal of State Normal School at Randolph.

My Dear Sir—I wish you would be kind enough to send me for insertion in the Annual Report, a statement of the condition of the State Normal School under your charge. Please state the number admitted and rejected at each examination, both for admission and for graduation. It will be of service to the general cause of education, as well as to the Normal Schools likewise, if you will give your views of the necessity for some such instrumentalities, derived from your personal acquaintance with teachers, schools, and prevalent methods of teaching.

Be kind enough to state also, the degree of success attending the operation of the schools, the principal difficulties and obstacles which are met, and to suggest in what way and by what means, the efficiency of the Normal Schools are to be promoted. Please give as early a reply as is convenient.

Yours very truly, J. S. ADAMS, Sec.

STATE NORMAL SCHOOL, Randolph, Vt., Sept. 9, 1867.

Hon. J. S. ADAMS:—Dear Sir—In reply to your letter asking for facts and opinions in reference to this Normal School, I will write briefly.

This school went into operation as a State Normal School, Tuesday, Feb. 26th, of the present year, the day previous having been devoted to the examination of candidates for admission. At the beginning of the school year in 1866, the school had been reorganized on a plan in many respects similar to that required by the legislation under which it is now operating. Particularly were new pupils admitted only on examination, but former pupils of the school were readmitted without examination. It was deemed advisable to carry forward this rule to the Normal School, consequently the number of admissions by examination have from the first been fewer than the whole number of pupils.

The number of candidates examined, also the number admitted, and rejected, each term, so far, with the number of graduates will be found in the following table.

SPRING TERM, 1867.

Examined for admission to First Course,	37
Admitted,	32
Rejected,	5
Examined for admission to Second Course,	2
Admitted,	1
Rejected,	1
Examined for graduation,	6
Passed examination for graduation,	6
Summer Term, 1867, whole number of pupils,	101
Examined for admission to First Course,	6
Admitted,	4
Examined for admission to Second Course,	2
Rejected,	1
Admitted,	1
Fall Term, 1867, whole number of pupils,	40
Examined for Admission to First Course,	42
Admitted,	34
Rejected,	8
Examined for admission to Second Course,	0
Whole number of pupils,	125

The deficiencies of Common School teachers form a subject of so universal complaint that I need not attempt to show that such deficiencies exist. I submit that it is well known to all persons conversant with schools:

1st. That our Common School teachers are greatly lacking in qualifications, and;

2nd. That the managers of our Academies and high schools have made zealous and continued efforts to furnish teachers better qualified for their work.

There has been, then, for years, wanting a supply of better prepared teachers. There has been equally earnest effort to furnish the supply. The result has not been satisfactory either to the people making the demand, or to the conductors of the schools attempting to supply the demand. This state of facts seems to indicate a lack of fit agencies to do the work required.

The difficulties encountered in the endeavor to prepare teachers in the Academies as they are, will doubtless furnish some good hints in regard to the character of the school required to do the work that they failed to do. Among the chief difficulties experienced by the conductor of an Academy, when making an honest effort in behalf of his pupils wishing to teach, are the multiplicity of subjects in which instruction must be given, and the varying capacity of the pupils to whom instruction is to be given. Though the Manager of an Academy need not "live by bread alone" he must yet have "bread;" in other words, his school must pay its own expenses; the various instruction which his pupils demand must be furnished for the tuition which he receives. By consequence, a teacher is often called upon to present more than half a dozen subjects in half a dozen hours, and these, such as require careful preparation in order to effective instruction. To do so many things well or equally well is not in the power of ordi-

nary men, so that there must be a selection of something to be done better than others; and this selection will be of those subjects which by the mental stimulus they afford in themselves, and through the ability of the classes pursuing them are most interesting, of those subjects which are commonly reported to give character to a school, and which the patrons of the school particularly demand excellence in. This will no where be a selection of the Common English branches. There are, however, in an Academy, always some young or dull pupils who must study common branches, because they can study nothing else. Now add to these facts, these others, that in an Academy large liberty must be allowed to the pupils in choosing their studies, that to choose the common branches seems to be to choose the company of the little folks, and of the stupid folks, that to study the classics or higher English branches is generally to secure better instruction, at school, and more credit at home, and tell me, if you please, how a man shall be cunning enough to keep young men and young women steadily at work in the branches required by law to taught in the common schools until they have so mastered them as to become able teachers.

The school for teachers can avoid a part of these evils by confining itself to the courses of study suited to the wants of teachers, and by excluding those pupils who have already made little or no progress in the branches to be pursued. These conditions are highly important, as enabling the school to give better instruction in the required courses, to make the study of the common branches respectable, to concentrate all the mental activity and force of both teachers and scholars on the object mainly in view.

To these conditions this school is becoming rapidly conformed, according to the terms agreed upon between the Trustees of the School and the Board of Education. By these terms the classes then existing in Latin and Greek were allowed to go on to the end of their course. At the beginning of the Spring Term there existed in these studies five classes; there are now two provided for within the school day. The number and strength of the classes in the common branches is increased; the thought of the school goes more largely to them. The whole number of classes to be provided is less by three than was the number last fall, though the pupils in attendance are more by thirty. The effect of the examination for admission is to free the school of the lowest classes formerly existing in it, and of those persons likeliest to hinder whatever classes they might be in, and is of great value to those who pass it in showing them what they need to learn, and of value to the school as furnishing a help to the classification of the pupils. The attendance on the school has, since the change from a school of mixed studies, admitting all comers, to an English school admitting only by examination, been somewhat diminished, but not more than was anticipated; and it is now on the increase. The patronage of those preparing for college has been mainly lost, and will by another year be wholly lost to us; also patronage is lost through the rejection of pupils not coming up to the required standard: it is hoped that this loss will be sufficiently made up by the increased number of those who intend to teach. Whether this expectation will be realized is still to be proved, but the present indications are favorable. The difficulties encountered so far in the management of the school are difficulties of transition.

Doubtless new difficulties will appear when the change now going rapidly on, in the character of the school, have been completed. These can be better described after they have been encountered. There is much that is new to the theory of Normal Schools involved in the plan now inaugurated in Vermont. The provision already made for our Normal Schools seems sufficient to carry them through another year, giving us time to observe further their workings, their tendencies, their needs. I have only to suggest certain cases of persons manifesting a desire to attend a Normal School, but without means to do so. The schools are equally without means to assist them. It occurs to me to ask, if the state have not interest enough in those persons and in the work that they

would do if prepared to teach in her schools to lend them a helping hand in the payment of some part of their expenses at these schools, on certain conditions, as to their teaching in the State. With respect, yours,

EDWARD CONANT.

STATE NORMAL SCHOOL, Johnson, Vt., Sept. 13, 1867.

J. S. ADAMS, Secretary of Board of Education :

DEAR SIR : Your letter asking for a statement of the Normal School at this place, my views of the necessity of such schools, the difficulties in the way of their successful operation, and suggestions as to the means of promoting their efficiency, &c., has been received, and I embrace the first convenient opportunity to reply.

The third term of the school has now begun, and though the number of students connected with it is less than could be desired, yet is sufficiently large to give a good degree of encouragement for the future. The building is new and spacious ; it has been built with due reference to the health, convenience, and comfort of those who may occupy it ; the apparatus is in good condition, much of it being entirely new, and is well adapted to our wants ; an excellent library is provided, containing many valuable and standard works ; and it is the general feeling of the Trustees and community that the school *must* succeed.

Forty-three students were admitted during the Spring Term, and two rejected ; six were admitted during the Summer Term, and none rejected ; twenty-four have been admitted up to date, this Fall, and none rejected. Additional applications have been made, and others are expected, so that the number admitted this Term, will, doubtless, be considerably increased.

Total number of students admitted at this time, seventy-three ; number connected with the school in the Spring, forty-three ; in the Summer, sixteen ; at date this Fall, twenty-eight ; total connected with the school at date, eighty-seven.

A class of five young ladies graduated at the close of the Spring Term, and none making application were rejected.

As to the necessity of some course of training for teachers, similar to that contemplated in the Normal School, it seems to me there can be no difference of opinion among intelligent men. A few visits to some of our District Schools will furnish evidence sufficient to convince any unprejudiced mind upon this point. In many cases radically defective methods of teaching will be found, in more cases still, *no method at all* ; both evils causing a great waste of time and labor, involving much needless expense, besides tending to the formation of incorrect habits of thought and study, and laying the foundation for a defective education on the part of the pupil, thereby working a great *personal* injury, as well one as to the community at large.

The remedy for this state of affairs cannot be found in our Academies and Public Schools, as these, with the multiplicity of objects and aims before them, cannot give that special instruction, that thorough training, which is needed to fit one for the arduous and responsible vocation of teaching. This work can be done only, by schools devoted especially to this object.

The following seem to me to be some of the obstacles in the successful operation of these schools at the present time. The system is new in this state, its working and advantages are not well understood ; consequently the public are not ready as yet to give it their patronage ; they would see it more fully demonstrated. Again, the competition of surrounding schools will, for a time, at least, affect the number attending the Normal Schools. These institutions, scattered over the country as they are, and many of them having the advantage as to expense, will be loth to give up any portion of their former patronage, and in order to retain it, many of them doubtless, will, in connection with their own

proper work, attempt to do that of the Normal School, and thus retain their former pupils at least.

The fact, also, that certificates of equal grade can be obtained at the Institutes, will, I think, tend to lessen somewhat the number who would otherwise attend the Normal School, and thus retain their former pupils at least.

Last, but not least, the time is so far distant when Normal Certificates are required by law, that most of the older teachers will not feel the necessity of procuring them, and the younger ones, for the same reason, will be inclined to delay the matter.

As to means for promoting the efficiency of the Normal Schools, I would suggest that the certificate of a Normal School graduate differ in some way, as to grade, from that granted at the Institute, so as to render the former more desirable. Also, as another inducement to attend these schools, that *State aid* be granted, sufficient, at least, to provide for the tuition of those who attend, on the condition that they shall teach in the state in proportion to the amount thus received; and also that some assistance be given in procuring a suitable library, apparatus, cabinet, &c.

Were there time I should like to speak upon these points more fully, and also present others, which seem to me to be of importance, but the want of time and the pressure of other duties, compel me to bring this letter to a close.

Most respectfully yours,

S. H. PEARL, A. M., Principal.

To the Honorable the Vermont Board of Education :

GENTLEMEN.—

The eleventh year during which I have had the honor of being Secretary of the Board of Education of Vermont, will terminate on the day of your annual meeting on Tuesday of the second week of the session of the Legislature in October next, and I desire most respectfully to decline being considered any longer a candidate for that position.

I find myself thoroughly exhausted in the arduous and constantly increasing labors of so protracted a term of service, and my health so shattered that it would be impossible for me to discharge the duties of the office for another year, except under the most favorable circumstances, and with the certainty of the earnest and harmonious co-operation of every member of your Honorable Board; and that this I can never expect I have become convinced, by circumstances, to part of which I will allude.

You will recollect that I was elected Secretary at the annual meeting of the Board, composed of your predecessors, held in October 1866. At that session of the Legislature, after the annual meeting, the Board of Education was reconstructed, the number of its members increased from five to seven, two of the members of the Board that elected me Secretary being dropped and four new members being added.

At the last meeting of the present Board, held at St. Johnsbury on the 5th December, certain action was taken by the Board, which will best appear from a quotation from the record of the meeting, as follows.

"After reading the record of the previous meeting, the Secretary suggested that, as the Board had, since the annual meeting when he had been selected Secretary, been reconstructed, in its organic law, as well as in its personelle, he desired that the Board would immediately, before proceeding with its other business, by reconsideration or in some other way, proceed to the selection of a Secretary. Whereupon, upon motion of Mr. Sanborne, it was *Resolved*—That the members of the Board of Education heartily endorse the election made at the annual meeting of the Board of Education, and we pledge to him our cordial and united support."

There were circumstances attending this action that added more than usual point and significance to this Resolution. You will recollect that I frankly stated that I had been notified by friends before the session of the Legislature, that an effort would be made to reconstruct the Board of Education in order, partly, to secure the adoption of certain books in the revised list, and partly to punish me for the sin of having been prominent in a certain then recent political campaign, as no hope existed of inducing the old Board to oust me on that score. You will also recollect that I reminded you of the fact which also appears in the Records of the Board, that the election of Secretary at the annual meeting had been once postponed to allow one of the sufferers in that political campaign to appear and show cause against my election.

You will recollect my stating that I had neither the grace to repent the course I had taken, or to promise not to repeat it in the future under the same circumstances, and that it was impossible for any man to discharge the duties of the office successfully or acceptably without the earnest and unanimous support of every member of the Board; and that I feared that my remaining in the position of Secretary would be disagreeable to the Board, and detrimental to the cause of education; and therefore it was that I requested the Board to consider me as having resigned, and proceed immediately to the election of a Secretary.

After such frank showing, I construed the resolution of the Board above quoted as an honorable pledge of cordial and hearty support and co-operation.

The next business of moment coming before the Board, was the selection of text-books for use in the schools. Some of the members of the Board knew that I was anxious to rid the schools of Greenleaf's Arithmetics, to retain Cornell's Geographies and add to them Guyot, and to substitute Willson's Readers for the Progressive, for I have advocated this in the Institutes and before the Educational Committees of the Legislature. But during the whole course of the proceedings of the Board in regard to the selection of books, continuing nearly through an entire week, the Board never asked my opinion in a single case, and when from a sense of official duty, I offered any advice, it was with great uniformity disregarded, every

book that I recommended except Guyot's Geographies was rejected, and every book that I opposed was adopted. The advice of the eminent and well-known practical teachers, who had been appointed by this Board at my nomination, and who had given their views at my solicitation, was in almost every case disregarded, and with attending circumstances which gave this disregard the aspect of premeditation.

All these circumstances, however intrinsically trivial, are sufficient evidence to me of that total lack of unison, which would add largely to the inherent difficulties and labors of the secretaryship, and make it impossible for me in that position to serve longer acceptably to the Board, agreeably to myself, or profitably to the schools.

And therefore, duly grateful for all courtesies received, with good wishes for your future success in your delicate and important functions, and in the hope that you may select a Secretary whom you will respect, and who shall receive that "cordial and united support," without which his and your labors must be barren of desirable results, and the absence of which, for any length of time, will inevitably result in breaking down our whole system of State supervision, or in the extinction of the Board and the creation of supervision resting solely in a single Superintendent of Public Instruction,

I am truly yours,

J. S. ADAMS.

APPENDIX.

1906

COMMON SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL LAWS.

BOARD OF EDUCATION AND SECRETARY.

SECTION

1. Appointment of board.
2. Annual Meeting.
3. Appointment of a secretary, and his duties.
4. The board to recommend to legislature alterations in existing school laws.
5. Vacancies to be filled.
6. Compensation of members of the board.
7. Board of education to select a list of school-books to be used in district schools, to become authoritative until Jan. 1, 1867. —Such books to be recommended for use in district schools.
8. Preparation and distribution of the annual report of secretary of board of education.

TOWN SUPERINTENDENTS.

9. Superintendent of common schools in each town; election and compensation; and how allowed.
10. Their duties.
11. Teachers shall possess moral character and requisite qualifications, and are required to obtain certificate from superintendent.
12. Certificates of qualifications of town superintendents of common schools, for teaching, how obtained.
13. Superintendents to give notice of time of examination of teachers.
14. Examination of teachers by town superintendents.
15. List of teachers, and dates of their certificates, to be lodged in town clerk's office.
16. Power of superintendent to revoke certificate of teachers in certain cases. Proceedings in such cases.

SECTION

17. Vacancy in office of superintendent, how supplied.
18. Time, not exceeding two days, spent by teacher in attendance upon teachers' institute held in the county, to be considered as expended in performance of his contract as teacher.

SCHOOL DISTRICTS.

19. Each town to keep one or more schools.—Subjects of instruction.
20. Towns to be divided into school districts.
21. Districts to be numbered, &c.
22. Mode of organizing districts in towns.
23. Mode in unorganized towns or gores.
24. Mode of forming and organizing districts from two or more adjoining towns.
25. Provisions for visitation, &c., of districts in more than one town.
26. Provisions for returns from districts in more than one town.
27. Inhabitants of one town may be set to a district in another.
28. Where taxed in such cases.
29. Districts to have powers of a corporation.—Voters therein.
30. Powers of school districts to provide schools in certain cases.
31. May hold estates, prosecute suits, &c.
32. Officers of district chosen annually. Time of annual meeting.—Duty of treasurer.
33. School district may elect the first constable their collector.
34. When moderator *pro tem.* may be chosen.
35. Vacancies; how supplied.
36. If clerk absent or disabled, prudential committee to discharge duties of office.
37. Clerk of school district to keep records of the votes of meetings.

SECTION

38. The school year to commence first day of April.
 39. Powers and duties of prudential committee.
 40. Provision for providing district schools in certain cases.—Offices vacated by neglect.—Such vacancies filled by selectmen.—Duty of prudential committee so appointed to sustain a school.
 - 41, 42. Meetings ; how appointed and notified.
 43. District may raise tax to build school house, &c.
 44. Districts may locate school-house. On application, selectmen may locate.
 45. Real estate to be taxed where located.
 46. Persons unable to pay may be omitted in tax-bill in certain cases.
 47. Prudential committee to assess tax, make rate bill, &c.
 48. Tax-bills and public moneys payable to the treasurer.—Orders to be drawn on treasurer.
 49. Power and duty of collector.
 50. Taxes to be laid on grand list, except for expenses of fuel and teacher's board, which may be apportioned to the scholar.
 51. Powers of committee to enforce collection of taxes.
 52. Taxes may be remitted at legal meeting, &c.
 53. Districts formed from two or more towns ; how dissolved.
 54. Powers and duties of justices.
 55. Each part, after separation, to be a district.
 56. Districts formed under former laws to retain their powers.
 57. Penalty on clerk for neglect in making returns.
 58. Penalty for neglect to notify.
 59. Penalty on superintendents for paying teachers not having obtained their certificate of qualification.
 60. Contracts for teaching invalid, unless teacher obtain certificate.
- HIGH, CENTRAL, OR GRADED SCHOOLS.
61. Prudential committee may call a school-meeting when, in their opinion, more than one teacher is required.

SECTION

62. Meeting may vote to have more than one school, and to erect school houses.
 63. Meeting may direct the sciences or higher branches of a thorough education to be taught.
 64. Committee may direct what school scholars shall attend.
 65. Children not residing in district shall not be permitted to attend the higher schools, except with consent of committee.
- UNION DISTRICT.
66. Union of school districts authorized.
 67. Provision for distributing public money to union school districts.
 68. Such districts to have corporate powers.
 69. First meeting ; how called.
 70. Clerk to be appointed.
 71. Time of holding the annual union school district meetings.
 72. Money ; how raised.—Locating school-houses.
 73. Prudential committee of union districts ; how constituted.
 74. Duties of the committee.—The schools in each district to be continued.—Union schools entitled to share of public money.—Proviso.
 75. Union districts to choose moderator, collector, and treasurer ; may raise money, &c.
 76. A district may withdraw from such union district in case two thirds of such district vote in favor of it.
 77. A contiguous school district may be united to a union district if two-thirds of the voters of such districts, present at the meeting, vote in favor of such union.
- TOWN SCHOOL FUND.
78. Selectmen to have charge of estate for use of schools.
 79. Securities and moneys belonging to school fund to be kept in town treasury.
 80. Selectmen annually to assess nine per cent. tax for schools.
 81. Tax omitted, in whole or in part, in certain cases.
 83. Towns may vote other taxes, and nine per cent. tax be omitted.
 - 83, 84. Mode of division of public

REVISED SCHOOL LAW.

3

SECTION

- money among school districts.
No district to receive any of such money except on certain conditions.
85. Statement of amount divided to each district to be left with town clerk.
 86. When district formed from two or more towns ; how money divided.
 87. Penalty for not assessing state school tax.
 88. How penalty to be appropriated.
 89. Grand-jury to indict towns for neglect in assessing, collecting, and expending tax.
 90. Penalty for embezzling school funds.
- UNITED STATES DEPOSIT MONEY.
91. Treasurer to receive moneys belonging to the United States to be deposited, and give certificate, &c.
 92. Moneys deposited divided among towns according to census of 1860.—Provision for unorganized towns and gores.
 93. On a new census ; new apportionment to be made.
 94. On a new apportionment ; treasurer to collect excess and pay over.—Deficiencies of towns made up.
 95. Each town to elect trustees.
 96. If towns neglect to choose trustees, treasurer to put shares on interest.
 97. Trustees to give bonds.
 98. Office to be considered vacant if bonds are not given.
 99. Treasurer to pay moneys to trustees and take receipt.
 100. Towns in such cases accountable.
 101. Trustees to loan money.
 102. Loans not to be over one year.
 103. Trustees may loan to the town.
 104. Income of deposit money appropriated to schools.
 105. When trustees to pay income to town treasurer.
 106. Not to be appropriated to schools in case, &c.

SECTION

107. Penalty on towns for neglect, &c.
108. Grand-jury to inquire and indict towns, &c.

STATISTICS.

109. Secretary of board of education to prescribe forms for school-register : to furnish them to town clerk ;—town clerk to forward receipt therefor to secretary ; and on failure to receive such registers by first of February, to notify secretary thereof.—District clerk to procure register of town clerk.
110. Duties of school-teacher and district clerk relative to school register.—No portion of public money to be distributed to any district whose register is not properly filled out and filed.
111. Town clerk to prepare abstract of returns, &c.
112. Returns of the town superintendents to the secretary of board ; when to be made, &c.
113. Trustees of academies and grammar-schools to make statistical returns to the secretary of the board.

SCHOOL-HOUSES AND YARDS.

114. School-house, how located.—Land for sites and yards, how obtained, and by what proceedings, may be enlarged, &c.
115. Lands not to be entered upon until damages paid.
116. Question of damages may be referred.
117. Owner of land dissatisfied with location, may apply to county court to appoint commissioners, &c.
118. Proceedings of commissioners, and decision.
119. Opening of land stayed ; court may fix time of opening, and may award execution.
120. If lands are mortgaged, damages to be paid mortgagee.

THE SCHOOL LAW OF VERMONT,

AS REVISED BY THE LEGISLATURE.

SECTION 1. The Governor shall annually nominate, and by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, shall appoint a Board of Education, consisting of six persons, two of whom shall be residents of each Congressional District, and three of whom, at least, shall be practical educators, and the Governor of the State for the time being, shall be, ex officio, a member of said Board.

SEC. 2. Said Board shall hold an annual meeting in Montpelier, commencing on Tuesday of the second week of the session of the Legislature, and one special meeting during the recess of the Legislature, and in the discretion of the Governor the time and place of holding such special meeting shall be designated by the Governor.

SEC. 3. At the annual meeting said Board shall appoint a suitable and competent person to be Secretary of said Board of Education, whose duties shall be first, to keep a record of all the official doings of said Board; second, to exert himself constantly and faithfully to promote the highest interests of Education in the State, by and with the advice of the Board of Education; and to this end he shall hold annually, in connection with the Academies and Seminaries of the State, at least one Teacher's Institute in each County in the State and not more than two in any one county, and said Institutes shall be holden at as central a point in the several counties, as is practicable, during the fall and spring terms of such schools. He shall during each year visit every part of the State, deliver lectures upon subjects pertaining to the interest of education, confer with Town Superintendents, and visit schools in connection with them, and furnish and distribute to them blank forms for collecting statistics of the various schools in the State. He shall prepare and present to the Board of Education, on the first day of their annual session, a report of his official doings for the preceding year, and a statement of the condition of the common schools of the State; of the expenditure of the school moneys therein; and such suggestions for improving their organization and modes of instruction, together with such other information in regard to systems of school instruction in other States and countries, as he shall deem proper.

SEC. 4. Said Board of Education shall from time to time, as they shall judge proper, recommend to the Legislature such alterations, revisions or amendments of existing laws, relating to common schools and seminaries of learning, as in their judgment are demanded in order to the perfecting of a system of general education in the State, and they shall annually, when required by a resolution of the House of Representatives so to do, make a report of their official doings, and of the state and condition of the schools in the State, to the Legislature.

SEC. 5. Said Board may at any time fill a vacancy in the Board or office of Secretary.

SEC. 6. The compensation to the members of said Board, and the Secretary thereof, for their services, shall be as follows :

To each member of the Board for each day's necessary attendance on the meetings of the same, the sum of three dollars, and the same mileage as is now provided by law for members of the Legislature ; to the Secretary the sum of one thousand dollars per year, and the expenses of procuring blank forms and postage ; all of which allowances shall be paid by the Treasurer of the State, on the certificate of the Governor.

SEC. 7. The list of Grammars, Geographies, Arithmetics, Readers and Spellers, which has been caused to be selected by the Board of Education, under the act of the Legislature approved Nov. 23, 1858, to be used in the district schools of this State, with such limitations of text books in each of said branches, as the said Board has seen fit to prescribe under said act ; such selection having been made prior to the first day of January, 1859, and having been published in all the newspapers in the State in the month of January, 1859, and also inserted in each School Register ; [and also the Geography and History of Vermont, selected by the Board of Education, under the act approved November 29th, 1862,] shall be and remain authoritative and binding upon the Board of Education, Superintendents and Teachers, until November 1st, A. D. 1868, and Teachers and Superintendents shall recommend for use in the district schools, as new books shall become necessary for instruction in the branches named, no other than books included in said list so established.

SEC. 8. The Secretary of the Board of Education shall annually prepare and print three thousand five hundred copies of his annual report, and have the same ready for distribution on the assembling of the Legislature in each year, and shall distribute the same as follows : one copy to each Town Superintendent ; one copy to each district clerk ; and one copy to each principal of a high school, union school or academy in this State ; the necessary copies for all except the members of the Legislature, to be forwarded by the Secretary to the various Town Clerks, and be by them distributed in the same manner in which the laws are distributed.

TOWN SUPERINTENDENTS.

Sec. 9. The several Towns in this State shall, at their annual March Meeting, elect one person to be Superintendent of Common Schools within such Town, who shall hold his office during the school year commencing the first day of April next after his election, and when appointed by the selectmen, during the remainder of the then current school year; who shall receive for his services one dollar for each day necessarily spent in the discharge of his legal duties, and a reasonable sum for his annual report to the March Meeting; and every Superintendent of Schools shall make out in detail his account for official services, stating the date and time spent, as well as the kind of service rendered, and the number of districts in which a school has been taught the year preceding, and make oath or affirmation to the correctness of the same, before some Justice of the Peace in the town in which he resides, which oath or affirmation shall be certified by said Justice before such Superintendent's account shall be presented to the Auditor of Accounts for allowance, who shall audit and allow the same, or so much thereof as is just and reasonable, and the same shall be paid out of the State Treasury, upon the order of the Auditor of Accounts; who is empowered to draw orders for the same; but no order shall be drawn to any Superintendent until he shall have filed with the Auditor of Accounts, the receipt of the Secretary of the Board of Education for the statistical returns of the preceding school year, in pursuance of the requirements of law; but no Superintendent shall receive compensation while visiting schools for a number of days greater than twice the number of [schools kept] in the town for which he acts as Superintendent [whatever the number of terms of such school kept during the year.]

[Any town in this State may, at its annual March Meeting, or any other meeting legally warned for that purpose, vote to pay the Superintendent of Common Schools within such town, out of the town treasury, such sum or sums of money in addition to the pay now provided by law for his services, as shall to such town appear reasonable and just.]

Sec. 10. It shall be the duty of the Town Superintendents to visit all such common schools within their respective towns as shall be organized according to law, at least once in each year, and oftener if they shall deem it necessary. At such visitation, the Superintendents shall examine into the state and condition of such schools, as respects the progress of the schools in learning and the order and government of the schools; and they may give advice to the Teachers of such schools as to the government thereof, and course of study to be pursued therein, and shall adopt all requisite measures for the inspection, examination, and regulation of the schools, and for the improvement of the scholars

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learning. Every Superintendent of Common Schools shall so make out his account for official services in the manner hereinbefore required, and deliver (a copy of) the same to the Town Clerk of the town in which such Superintendent was elected or appointed on or before the day previous to the annual Town Meeting next after the election or appointment of such Superintendent, and the same shall be filed and kept in the office of the Town Clerk.

Sec. 11. The Town Superintendent shall require full and satisfactory evidence of the good moral character of all instructors who may be employed in the public schools, in their respective towns, and shall ascertain by personal examination, their qualifications and capacity for the instruction and government of schools, and every instructor of a district school shall obtain of the Town Superintendent of such town, a certificate of his qualifications before he opens such school, which certificate shall be available for one year only.

Sec. 12. Whenever any Superintendent of common schools in any town desires a certificate of his qualifications for teaching a district school in the town where he resides, he may make application for the same to the Superintendent of Schools of any adjoining town, who shall examine such applicant in relation to his qualifications therefor, and if found satisfactory may give his certificate to said applicant in due form of law, which certificate shall be valid for one year from the date hereof, in the town where said applicant resides.

Sec. 13. The Town Superintendents shall give public notice of suitable times and places, that they will attend to the examination of teachers, before commencement of the winter and summer schools.

Sec. 14. The examination of teachers by Town Superintendents shall be public, and held in some public place, after due notice given pursuant to law, in the months of April or May and November in each year, and citizens generally invited to attend; and no examination of teachers shall be held at any other time or in any other manner except in the discretion of the Superintendents, and for the accommodation of teachers prevented by sickness or other unavoidable circumstances from attending at the regular public examination, and any Superintendent examining teachers at any other time than the regular public examination, shall be entitled to receive from each teacher applying for such examination the sum of fifty cents.

Sec. 15. It shall be the duty of Town Superintendents of Common Schools to make out and lodge in the Town Clerk's office in their respective towns, annually, on or before the first

day of February, a list of the names of all the teachers to whom they have granted certificates during the preceding year, together with the respective dates of the certificates.

SEC. 16. Whenever, upon personal examination of schools, the Superintendent of any Town shall become satisfied beyond a reasonable doubt that a teacher to whom a certificate has been granted, is incompetent to teach or govern his school properly, or setting an evil example before his school, the Superintendent is hereby empowered, in his discretion, to revoke the certificate theretofore granted to such teacher, by filing in the Town Clerk's office of such town, a statement in writing of having made such revocation, [and the reason therefor,] and delivering a copy thereof to the prudential committee and also to the teacher whose certificate is so revoked; and every teacher's certificate that shall have been duly revoked, pursuant to the provisions of this section, shall immediately, upon the filing of such revocation, become thereafter null and void and of no effect, and such teacher's contract with the school district shall become void therefrom, and it shall not be lawful for the prudential committee to pay such teacher for any services thereafter performed as teacher, unless by a vote of the district.

SEC. 17. When from any cause, a vacancy shall occur in the office of Town Superintendent of Common Schools, in any town, the Selectmen shall supply such vacancy, until a new election shall be made, and the Superintendent so appointed by the Selectmen, shall have all the powers and be subject to all the duties and requirements of Superintendents elected by the town.

[Whenever the selectmen of any town shall fail to appoint Superintendents of Schools as provided in section seventeen of chapter twenty-two of the General Statutes, persons desiring to teach in said towns may make application for certificates of qualification to the Superintendent of Schools of any adjoining town, who shall examine such applicants in relation to their qualifications therefor, and if found satisfactory, may give his certificate to said applicant in due form of law, which certificate shall be valid for one year from date thereof in said town where said applicant desires to teach.]

SEC. 18. The time, not to exceed two days, actually spent by any teacher of a common school in attendance upon the Teachers' Institute, held pursuant to law, in the county in which such teacher shall be employed, during the time for which such teacher is engaged to teach such school, shall be considered as time lawfully expended by such teacher in the service of the district by which he is employed, and in the legitimate performance of his contract as teacher.

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SCHOOL DISTRICTS.

SEC. 19. Each organized town in the State shall keep and support one or more schools, provided with competent teachers, of good morals, for the instruction of the young in orthography, reading, writing, English grammar, geography, arithmetic, history and constitution of the United States, and good behavior, and special instruction shall be given in the Geography and History and constitution and principles of government of the State of Vermont. 32 Vt. 224.

SEC. 20. When the inhabitants of any town cannot be conveniently accommodated in one school district, it shall be the duty of such town at a legal meeting, notified for that purpose, to divide that town into as many school districts as shall be judged most convenient; to define and determine their limits, and from time to time, to divide such as are too large, unite such as are too small, or otherwise to alter them, and make new districts, as shall be found expedient. 8 Vt. 402.
10 Vt. 490.
23 Vt. 626.
25 Vt. 811.

SEC. 21. The districts so formed shall be numbered in a regular series, from number one upwards, and shall be known and designated by the name of their respective numbers; and their numbers and description, and all alterations made therein, from time to time, shall be recorded in the office of the Town Clerk.

SEC. 22. When it is necessary to organize any school district in any town, any three or more of the voters in such district may make application in writing to the Selectmen of such town, and it shall be the duty of the Selectmen to give notice for a meeting in such district, by posting up a notification thereof, specifying the time and place appointed, and the business of the meeting, in one or more of the most public places in such district, at least seven days before the time therein specified; and it shall be the duty of one of the Selectmen to preside in the meeting until a Moderator and Clerk shall be chosen; after which the district shall be deemed to be legally organized. 11 Vt. 607.

SEC. 23. The Selectmen of any organized town, on the application of three or more voters, in an adjoining unorganized town, or gore, may organize school districts in such unorganized town or gore, in the manner provided in the preceding section of this chapter, and if more than one district is needed, such selectmen may divide such unorganized town or gore into as many districts as may be required, and may define and determine their limits, and number them as provided in sections twenty and twenty-one of this chapter; and the selectmen shall be paid a reasonable compensation for their services by the petitioners.

SEC. 24. When any number of inhabitants of two or more adjoining towns shall find it necessary or convenient to be formed into one district for the purpose of supporting a school, such towns by a concurrent vote for that purpose, may form the territory occupied by such inhabitants, into a district; and the first meeting may be notified, and the district organized by the Selectmen of either of the towns, on application in writing for that purpose, by three or more voters; and the meeting shall be notified, and the district organized, in the same manner as provided in the twenty-second section of this chapter; and when organized, such districts shall have the same powers and be subject to the same liabilities as other districts.

SEC. 25. In case a district shall be formed of parts of two towns, it shall, for all purposes of visitation and returns, and for the examination of school teachers, as provided in the tenth and eleventh sections of this chapter, be taken and deemed to belong to the county and town in which the school house of such district shall be situated.

SEC. 26. In any school district formed of territories or inhabitants, belonging to two or more towns, the Clerk of said district shall hereafter make out his returns of the statistics of each portion of the district belonging to the several towns, and file them in the Town Clerk's office to which each part or portion of said district respectively belongs; in which case the returns shall be made in all respects agreeably to the provisions of section one hundred and ten of this chapter.

21 Vt. 402. SEC. 27. Any town, by vote in town meeting, may set one or more persons, residing in such town, to a school district in an adjoining town, if such district shall, by vote, consent to receive such persons; and any persons so united to a school district in another town, shall have the same rights, and be subject to the same liabilities as if they had resided in the same town.

SEC. 28. Whenever a person residing in a school district in one town, shall be set to a school district in an adjoining town, as provided in the preceding section of this chapter, his property and person shall be taxed, and the taxes thereon shall be collected within and for the use of the district to which he shall be set as aforesaid, in the same manner as said property and person would be taxable, and the taxes thereon collectable in the said district in the town wherein he resides, in case he had not been set to said other district in an adjoining town:

Provided, that said property and person shall be taxable as aforesaid only in the district to which said person shall be set as aforesaid.

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SEC. 29. When a school district shall be organized, it shall have all the powers of a corporation, for the purpose of maintaining a school in such district; and any man of the age of twenty one years, who, at the time, shall reside, and be liable to pay taxes in such district, shall be a legal voter in the same.

[WHO ARE VOTERS IN DISTRICT SCHOOL MEETINGS.]

No person shall be entitled to vote in any town, city, village, or school district meeting, who is not a citizen of this State, and a resident of the town, city, village, or school district where said person may claim a right to vote.

The word "citizen," as used in this act, shall be construed to mean a person born within this or some one of the United States, or naturalized agreeably to the acts of Congress, or a person who has become a freeman of this State by virtue of the laws in force before June 26, 1828.]

SEC. 30. The several school districts in this State shall have power at their annual meetings to designate the number of weeks during which the winter and summer schools shall be sustained in such districts, and appoint the time for the commencement of such schools. And in case the Prudential Committee of such districts shall refuse or neglect, for more than two weeks after the time thus appointed, to provide such schools in compliance with such direction, such districts may, at any legal meeting warned for that purpose, declare the office of Prudential Committee in such district vacant; and thereupon such offices shall become legally vacant, and such districts may then proceed to fill such vacancy, by the election of a Prudential Committee, who shall thereafter be clothed with all the powers, and subject to all the duties and liabilities they would have been liable to, if elected at the annual meeting of such districts.

SEC. 31. The several school districts shall be authorized to take and hold any estate, real or personal, conveyed to them for the purpose of supporting schools in such districts, and may take care of, dispose of, and appropriate the same for such purpose; and may commence and prosecute any action against any person for the non-performance of any contract made with them, or for any damage done to their property, and may be sued for the non-performance of any contract made by them.

SEC. 32. The officers of each school district shall be a Moderator to preside in the meetings, a Clerk, a Collector of taxes, a Treasurer, and a Prudential Committee, consisting of one or three voters in such district; all of which officers shall be elected at the annual school meeting, which shall be held

11 Vt. 618.

20 Vt. 487.

23 Vt. 416.

32 Vt. 769.

on the last Tuesday of March of each year, and their term of office shall commence at the time of their election and continue until others are chosen; and it shall be the duty of the Treasurer to make an annual report to the said district of the amount of money received by him, and the manner in which it has been disbursed.

SEC. 33. Any school district may elect the First Constable in any town to be the Collector of Taxes in such district, if such Constable shall choose to accept such office, notwithstanding such Constable may not be an inhabitant of such district; and so elected and accepting, such Constable shall have all the powers and be subject to all the duties which, by law, are vested in or imposed upon school district collectors.

SEC. 34. In case of the death, absence or disability of the Moderator of a school district, at any meeting legally warned, a moderator *pro tempore* may be chosen to preside in said meeting.

11 Vt. 618. SEC. 35. When from any cause, a vacancy shall occur in
26 Vt. 503. the offices of Clerk, Collector of taxes, Treasurer, or Prudential Committee of any school district in any town in this State, the Selectmen shall supply such vacancy until a new election shall be made; and the officers so appointed shall have all the powers and be subject to all the duties, requirements and liabilities as they would be if chosen by such school district.

SEC. 36. In the absence or disability of the Clerk of any school district, it shall be the duty of the Prudential Committee of such district, to discharge the duties imposed on Clerks of school districts, in this chapter.

SEC. 37. It shall be the duty of the Clerk of each school district in this State, to keep a fair record of all the votes and proceedings of school meetings in their respective districts, and certify the same when required.

SEC. 38. The school year for the purpose contemplated in this chapter, shall be taken as commencing on the first day of April in each year and ending on the last day of March following.

20 Vt. 487. SEC. 39. It shall be the duty of the Prudential Committee
24 Vt. 528. to keep each school house in their district in good order, at
30 Vt. 155. the expense of the district; and in case there shall be no
33 Vt. 77. school house, to provide a suitable place for each school at the expense of the district; to see that fuel and furniture, and all appendages and things necessary for the advantage of the school, be provided; to appoint and agree with a teacher to instruct the school, and to remove him when necessary; and adopt all requisite measures for the inspection, examination and regulation of the school, and for the improvement of the scholars in learning.

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Sec. 40. If any school district shall, for the period of six months next after the time fixed by law for the annual school meeting, omit or neglect to cause a common school of some grade to be taught in such district, for at least two months, by means of such omission or neglect, all the offices of said district shall be vacated; and on the application of any two legal voters in said district, the Selectmen of the town in which such district is located shall proceed to fill such vacancies as is provided for by law in the case of vacancies in such offices otherwise occurring; and it shall be the duty of the Prudential Committee to sustain a sufficient school in such district at least four months in each school year, at the expense of such district, and such Committee shall have all the powers given by law to Prudential Committees duly elected in legal school meeting; and such Committee is hereby further empowered, without previous vote of such district, to assess a tax upon the grand list of such district for the amount necessary to sustain such school for the four months specified, and make out a rate bill therefor, and proceed in all respects in the collection and disbursement thereof, as though directed so to do by a previous vote of a legal school meeting in such district.

[Section forty of chapter twenty-two of the General Statutes is hereby amended by adding thereto, as follows: And it is further provided that if any district, either by vote or otherwise, shall fail to commence and maintain a term of school, within four weeks from the tenth day of November in each year, and within four weeks from the first day of May in each year, or shall fail to provide and keep in proper repair a suitable place for both winter and summer school, the Selectmen of the town on the application of any two legal voters in the district and upon hearing of the parties, may declare all offices in the district vacant, and thereupon shall proceed to provide a suitable place for a winter and a summer school, and may employ some suitable person to teach school in said district, for a period not less than three months; and to defray the expenses, they may lay a tax on the district in the manner now provided by law, by Prudential Committees, and may appoint a Collector of taxes and Clerk who shall have the same powers and perform the same duties as are now provided for school district Collectors and Clerks.]

Sec. 41. The meetings of a school district shall be appointed and notified by the Clerk, on application to him in writing, by three or more legal voters of the district; and, in case of the absence or neglect of the Clerk, one or more of the Prudential Committee shall appoint and notify such meetings on such application; and the meeting shall be notified by posting

14 Vt.300.
16 Vt.439.
17 Vt.337.
20 Vt.487.
22 Vt.309.

up notices in one or more of the most public places in the district, specifying the time, place, and object of the meeting, at least seven and not more than twelve days before the time therein specified for the meetings; and every district Clerk and Prudential Committee, who shall wilfully violate the provisions of this section, shall be subject to the penalty imposed in section fifty-eight of this chapter.

SEC. 42. The annual meeting of a school district may be appointed and notified by the Clerk of said district without any application to him therefor by any of the voters of the district, and such annual meeting, shall be notified in the manner provided by law for the notification of special school district meetings. And in case of the absence or neglect of the Clerk, one or more of the Prudential Committee may appoint and notify such annual meeting as aforesaid, without any application to him therefor by any of the voters of the district.

28 Vt. 416. SEC. 43. The several school districts may, by vote in a
31 Vt. 337. legal meeting, appointed and notified as required in the forty-
32 Vt. 769. first section of this chapter, raise money by a tax on the lists of the inhabitants of such districts, for the purpose of erecting or repairing a school house, or to purchase or hire a building to be used as a school house, and to purchase land for a school house to stand upon, and for yards, and for the necessary erection of out-buildings thereon, and for the accommodation of the same, and to support a school in such district as may be judged necessary or expedient.

SEC. 44. Each district may also determine, by a vote of two-thirds of the legal voters present, in what place and in what part of the district the school house shall be located, and may choose a committee to superintend the building, repairing or purchasing of such school house, for procuring the necessary furniture and utensils for the same; and if the voters in any district cannot agree upon the location of the school house, the Selectmen of the same town, on application to them by the Prudential Committee, may fix upon the place for the school house in such district.

SEC. 45. When a tax bill shall be laid, or ordered by vote of any district for the purpose mentioned in this chapter, all real estate shall be taxed in the district in which it is situated.

AUTHORIZING SELECTMEN TO BUILD SCHOOL HOUSES IN CERTAIN CASES.

[If any school district shall omit or neglect to provide a suitable school house for such district, for the period of two years next previous to the application herein provided, on application in writing of three legal voters in such district, to the Selectmen of any town in which such district is located, such

selectmen shall appoint a time and place when such application shall be heard by said Selectmen, and shall cause such applicants to give notice of such application, and of the time and place of hearing, to such school district, by service of such notice in the same manner as writs of summons, at least twenty days before such hearing.

Such Selectmen shall carefully investigate the matter set forth in such application, and if in their opinion, such district guilty of negligence in the premises, and the interests of education so require, such Selectmen shall order such district to build a school house, which order shall be served on such district in the same manner as ordinary process in civil causes.

If any school district shall neglect for the period of six months after the service of such order, to direct, by vote of a legal school meeting of said district, a school house to be built in compliance with such order, and shall for the same period of time after the service of such order, omit to raise money for the purpose of building such school house, the Selectmen of such town making such order shall be and they are hereby empowered to assess a tax upon the grand list of such school district for an amount necessary to build such school house, and make a rate bill therefor, and proceed in the collection thereof in the same manner as is provided by law for the collection of town taxes; and said tax shall be collected by the First Constable of such town, and paid over to such selectmen, and by them appropriated in building such school house.

All proceedings under this act shall be recorded in the Town Clerk's office of any town in which such district is located, and copies of such record certified by the Clerk of such town shall be legal evidence thereof.]

Sec. 46. At any meeting of any school district, legally summoned, the legal voters in such district may instruct the Prudential Committee to omit, in making up the tax bill for the support of schools, the names of such persons as are not able to pay their proportion of such tax; two-thirds of the voters present assenting thereto.

Sec. 47. The Prudential Committee shall, as soon after the close of the district for that purpose, as the circumstances of the case may require, assess a tax for the amount voted to be raised on the list of the inhabitants of such district and on lands in such district belonging to persons living out of it, and make out a rate bill of the same; and any justice of the same county shall, on application for that purpose, make out a warrant in due form of law, directed to the Collector of such district, authorizing and requiring him to levy and collect such tax, within the time limited therein, and pay the same to the treasurer of such district.

SEC. 48. All school district tax bills shall be made payable to the treasurer; and the selectmen, upon making a division of the public school money, shall make the orders of the same payable to the treasurers in the several school districts, and the Prudential Committees shall draw orders for all sums due from said districts upon the respective treasurers thereof.

SEC. 49. When such tax bill and warrant shall be delivered to the Collector, it shall be his duty to proceed in levying and collecting such tax in the same manner, and he shall have the same power, as provided by law for collectors in collecting town taxes; and shall, within the time limited, collect and pay the same to the Treasurer, to be applied to the purposes authorized by the vote of the district.

SEC. 50. All monies raised by the school districts for the support of [schools shall be raised upon the grand list of said districts; and all expenses incurred by school districts for the support of schools shall be defrayed by a tax upon the grand list of said districts.]

SEC. 51. The prudential committee of any school district shall have the same authority to enforce the collection and payment of the money voted and assessed by such district as the treasurer of the town, by law has, for enforcing the payment and collection of town taxes.

SEC. 52. The legal voters in any district, at a legal meeting warned for that purpose, may remit or make abatement on any tax bill made out for the collection of taxes assessed by such district, to an amount not exceeding five per cent. of the same, two-thirds of the voters, present at each meeting, agreeing thereto.

SEC. 53. When any school district shall have been formed from territory or inhabitants belonging to two or more towns, the inhabitants of such district, belonging to either town, may, if there shall be sufficient cause for it, procure their union with the other towns to be dissolved; and for that purpose, three or more of the legal voters may make application to a judge of the county court of the same county, whose duty it shall be to appoint three justices of the same county, not inhabitants of either town in interest, to inquire into the circumstances of the case.

SEC. 54. If, in the opinion of such justices, it shall be expedient to dissolve such district, they shall order the same to be dissolved, and shall make a certificate thereof and leave the same in the office of the town clerk of each town interested, to be recorded; and shall thereupon order a distribution of the property belonging to such district, to the inhabitants thereof residing in the several towns, and may order

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the payment of such damages by, or to, the inhabitants of either town, as shall be just and equitable.

SEC. 55. The inhabitants of each town, after the separation, shall be deemed a legal school district, and may become organized in the manner provided for the organization of other districts, and may, by vote, assume a corporate name, unless a corporate name shall otherwise have been given to it, and may receive, recover and take care of such damages or property, as may be awarded to it by the justices.

SEC. 56. Any school district, heretofore organized according to previous laws, shall remain a legal school district, subject to the provisions of this chapter; and the officers which shall have been appointed, shall have the same power, perform the same duties, and be subject to the same liabilities, as are provided in this chapter.

SEC. 57. If any district clerk shall wilfully neglect to make such return of the number of scholars in his district, as is required in this chapter, or shall knowingly and wilfully make a false return, he shall forfeit and pay to the town, for the use of schools in such town, a sum equal to the amount of moneys which his district would have been entitled to draw from the treasury of the town, during the year in which the offence shall be committed, to be recovered in an action in the name of the town, with costs.

SEC. 58. If any district clerk or prudential committee, whose duty it shall be to warn a meeting of any school district, for the purpose of choosing the necessary officers, or for other purposes, shall neglect or refuse to warn such meeting, for the space of ten days after application shall have been made to them in writing, by three or more legal voters belonging to such district, the person so offending shall forfeit and pay, for the use of the school in such district, twenty dollars for each delay of ten days, to be recovered in an action in the name of such district, with costs.

SEC. 59. If any prudential committee, in any school district in this State, shall pay out of the moneys of said district to any teacher employed therein, who has not obtained a certificate of qualification from the town superintendent in the manner required by law, or in case there shall be no town superintendent in such town, from the superintendent of some other town in the same county, such committee shall be liable to such district for all such moneys so by him or them paid, to be recovered in an action on the case, prosecuted in the name of such district, and it is hereby made the duty of the town agent, of the town wherein such district is

situated, to prosecute all such actions to effect at the expense of and in the name and for the benefit of such district.

20 Vt.495. SEC. 60. Any contract for teaching hereafter made, between the prudential committee of any school district, and
 26 Vt.115. any common school teacher, shall be null and void, if the
 27 Vt.281. said teacher shall have failed to obtain a certificate of qualification of the superintendent of the town in which such district shall be situated, as provided for in the eleventh section
 28 Vt.575. of this chapter, before the commencement of the school for
 29 Vt.483. which such contract shall have been made.
 30 Vt.586.

HIGH, OR CENTRAL, OR GRADED SCHOOLS.

SEC. 61. When the children of any school district shall have become so numerous as, in the opinion of the prudential committee, to require more than one teacher, the clerk of such district shall, on application of such committee, call a meeting of such district, for the purpose of ascertaining the views of the district thereon.

SEC. 62. If at such meeting, a majority of the legal voters shall vote to have two or more schools in the district at the same time, such district may vote to erect as many school houses in the district as shall be found necessary, and shall, by vote or in such other manner as the legal voters present may determine, fix on the location of such school house or houses.

SEC. 63. Any such district so composed of several schools may by a vote of a majority of such district, at any meeting legally warned for that purpose, direct the teacher of the higher or central school of the district, to teach any of the sciences or higher branches of a thorough education, which may not, by existing laws, have been authorized.

SEC. 64. The prudential committee of such district, or a committee appointed for that purpose, shall have power to examine as to the age and qualifications of the children, and designate the school they shall each attend.

SEC. 65. Children not residing in such district shall not be permitted to attend the higher school of such district, except with the consent of the prudential committee, who may prescribe the terms upon which they may be admitted.

UNION DISTRICTS.

SEC. 66. Any two or more contiguous school districts in this State may associate together and form a union district, for the purpose of maintaining a union school, to be kept for the benefit of the older children of such associated

districts, if the inhabitants of each of such districts shall, at legal meetings called for that purpose, agree to form such union by a vote of two-thirds of the legal voters thereof, present at such meeting.

SEC. 67. The several union districts in this State, in the distribution of the public school money, by the several towns in which such union districts may be situated, as to that part which is to be distributed for attendance of scholars, shall be accounted as a common school district, and shall receive a proportionate share of the public school money, under the same regulations and conditions that are provided for common school districts. Provided, however, that nothing in this section shall be constructed as affecting, in any way, the provisions of "an act to enlarge the powers of the Montpelier Union District," approved November 21, 1859.

SEC. 68. Every union district thus formed shall be a body corporate, with the corporate powers of other school districts, in relation to prosecuting and defending suits at law, and holding real and personal property; and shall be called by such name as said district at its first meeting shall determine.

SEC. 69. The first meeting of such union district shall be called in such manner, and at such time and place, as may be agreed upon by the associate districts respectively, by a vote of the same, at the time of forming such union.

SEC. 70. Such union district, at the first meeting thereof, shall choose by ballot a clerk, who shall perform the same duties as are prescribed in relation to the clerks of other school districts, and shall hold his office until another shall be chosen in his stead.

SEC. 71. The several union school districts shall hold their annual meeting for the election of officers on the first Wednesday after the last Tuesday of March in each year; and the term of office of the officers then elected shall continue for one year, and until others are elected.

SEC. 72. Such union district may, at any legal meeting called for that purpose, raise money for erecting, purchasing, renting or repairing any building to be used as a school house for the union school aforesaid, and purchasing or renting land for the use and accommodation thereof; also, for purchasing fuel, furniture, and other necessary articles for the use of said school, and in assessing and collecting a tax or taxes for the above purposes, the like proceedings shall be had as are prescribed by law for other school districts: said district may also determine where said school house shall stand, and in case the location thereof should not be so determined by said district, the same shall be referred to the

selectmen of the town in which such districts so uniting are situated, in the same manner as is provided in the case of other districts, and said districts may choose a committee to carry into effect the provisions aforesaid.

SEC. 73. The chairman of the prudential committees, of the various districts composing the Union district, shall together constitute the prudential committee of the union district, and the member of the prudential committee of any school district first elected, shall be considered the chairman thereof: Provided, that whenever such union district shall be formed of an even number of districts, there shall be added to said committee one person, resident in such union district, who shall be chosen annually at any legal meeting of said union district, duly warned for that purpose, and who shall hold his office for one year thereafter, and until another shall be chosen.

SEC. 74. The prudential committee of the union district shall also determine the ages and qualifications of the children of the associated districts, who may attend the union school; and every union school district shall be entitled to receive their proportion of the public school money as provided in section sixty-seven of this chapter, and under the regulations and conditions therein prescribed; provided, however, that the schools in each of the associated districts shall continue to be maintained in the same manner as if there had been no provision for the establishment of union districts.

SEC. 75. Each union district, at its annual meeting, shall choose a moderator and collector or collectors of taxes, and treasurer, who shall perform the same duties as prescribed in relation to moderator, collector and treasurer of other school districts, and shall hold office until others shall be chosen in their stead, and such union district may, at any legal meeting called for that purpose, raise money for paying teachers' wages, and in assessing and collecting a tax or taxes for that purpose, the like proceedings shall be had as are prescribed by law for other school districts.

SEC. 76. In case any district, being a member of a union school district, becomes dissatisfied therewith, it may withdraw therefrom by a concurrent vote of two-thirds of the voters present, at meetings duly warned for that purpose of the inhabitants of each of said districts respectively, to-wit: the dissatisfied district and the union district: Provided, that the inhabitants of said dissatisfied district shall not be entitled to vote at the meeting of the union district on the question of permitting them to withdraw therefrom.

SEC. 77. If any contiguous school district wishes to join

a union school district, it may do so by a vote of two-thirds of the legal voters, inhabitants of said contiguous district, at a meeting duly warned for the purpose, and shall thereupon become a member of, and entitled to share equally with the original members in all the rights and privileges belonging to said union district: provided, such union district shall, by a majority of two-thirds of the voters present, at a meeting duly warned for that purpose, vote to receive such contiguous district.

TOWN SCHOOL FUND.

SEC. 78. The selectmen of the several towns shall have the charge, care and management of all real and personal estate, in any town, appropriated as a fund for the use of schools in such town, unless otherwise provided for by law, or unless the person, granting such estate, shall direct the same to be kept and managed in some other way, or by some other persons: and the selectmen shall lease all lands, which may be appropriated for such purposes, and loan all moneys, on annual interest and with sufficient security, and shall annually render an account of the same to the town; and may in the name of the town, commence, prosecute and defend all actions necessary for the recovery or protection of the estate, so entrusted to their care.

SEC. 79. All leases, bonds, mortgages, and other securities, belonging to such fund, shall be deposited in the office of the treasurer of the town: and the rents, interest and income of such fund, and all moneys received on account of the same, shall be paid into the treasury of such town; and a separate account of the same shall be kept on the books of the treasurer.

SEC. 80. The selectmen of each town shall, annually, previous to the first day of January, assess a tax of nine cents on the dollar, of the list of such town, to be collected and paid to the treasurer of the town previous to the first day of March succeeding, in the same manner that other town taxes are collected, except as provided in the two following sections.

SEC. 81. If, in any town, the income appropriated in such town for the use of schools, after deducting one-half the income arising from the United States deposit money, shall amount to as large a sum as would be raised by such tax, the selectmen shall not be required to assess the same; or if such income shall be less, the selectmen shall assess a tax only sufficient, with such income, to amount to the sum which would be raised by a tax of nine cents on the dollar.

Sec. 82. The several towns may, at the annual March meeting, or at any other meeting warned for that purpose, raise such sum for the use of schools as they may think proper, by a tax on the list of such towns : and if the sums so raised, together with the income appropriated to that use, after the deductions mentioned in the preceding section, shall in any one year amount to as large a sum as would be raised by the tax required by this chapter to be assessed by the selectmen, such tax may be omitted.

Sec. 83. The one-third part of the proceeds of the tax assessed by the selectmen, with the income of any town appropriated to the use of schools, and all sums raised by vote of the town for such use, shall annually, on the Friday next preceding the last Tuesday of March, be divided by the selectmen of such town between the several common school districts in such town equally, without regard to the number of scholars such districts may contain ; and the remainder shall be divided between such districts, including also any union district, in proportion to the aggregate attendance of the scholars of such district, between the ages of four and twenty years, upon the common schools in such districts during the preceding school year, such aggregate attendance to be ascertained from the record thereof, to be kept in the registers of such schools, by adding together the number of days of actual attendance of each legal scholar, as shown by the register, and the same shall be paid over under the direction of the selectmen, to the several treasurers of such districts ; provided, that no union district, nor district for the support of common schools, shall receive any share of such moneys, unless there shall, during the year next preceding such distribution, have been kept in such district a school for the term of two months with other moneys than those which may be drawn from the town treasury ; nor unless the moneys so drawn from the treasury shall have been faithfully expended by such district, in paying teachers wages and board, and for fuel for such schools, and for no other purpose ; provided, also, that nothing herein shall effect the powers of the Montpelier union district, under the act entitled "An act to enlarge the powers of such district," approved November 21, 1859.

Sec. 84. It shall be the duty of the selectmen, in making their distributions of public moneys, as required in the preceding section of this chapter, to regard the returns of district clerks, as provided for in this chapter, as returns for the year preceding such distribution.

Sec. 85. It shall be the duty of the selectmen of each town, in the month of April annually, after they shall have

made division of the public money to the several districts as required by law, to leave with the town clerk of the town, a written statement of the amount of money by them divided to each district during the current school year.

SEC. 86. When any district shall be formed of territory, or of inhabitants, belonging to two or more towns, such district shall receive from the treasury of each town a proportion of the moneys so distributed, as follows :

First. Of that part which, by the provisions of this chapter, is to be divided equally among the districts, such sum as is in the proportion to the sum severally received by the other districts in such town, which the number of children in such district, residing in such town, bears to the whole number of children in such district :

Second. Of that part of the public money which is required to be divided among the districts in proportion to the aggregate attendance of the scholars of such districts between the age of four and twenty years, such districts shall receive such sums as will be in the proportion to the whole sum to be divided in such towns which the aggregate attendance of children in such district, residing in such town, bears to the aggregate attendance of the whole number of children in such town ; and the clerk of such district shall make returns to the town clerk in each town, specifying the number of children in the district between the ages of four and twenty years, and the number residing in each of the towns composing such district, and the aggregate attendance of children in such district residing in each town, also the aggregate attendance of the whole number of children between the ages of four and twenty years in such district.

SEC. 87. If the Selectmen of any town shall neglect or ^{18 Vt.565.} refuse to assess, collect or appropriate the tax for the support of schools as provided in this chapter, such town shall forfeit and pay to the county, in which such town may be situated, as a penalty, a sum equal to double the amount which the selectmen shall be required to raise by tax, with costs, to be recovered, by information or indictment, in the county court of such county.

SEC. 88. One-fourth part of such penalty shall be for the use of the county, and the other three-fourths thereof shall be paid to the selectmen for the use of schools in such town; and it shall be the duty of the Treasurer of the county immediately after the receipt of such money, to give notice thereof to the selectmen of the town, and the selectmen shall forthwith receive, apportion and appropriate the same to the support of schools in such town, in the same manner as it

should have been, if raised by tax, assessed by the selectmen.

SEC. 89. It shall be the duty of the grand jurors empanelled before the several county courts, annually to inquire and ascertain, whether the several towns in their respective counties shall have duly assessed, collected and expended the tax for the support of schools, as required in this chapter; and in case of any neglect, it shall be the duty of the grand jurors to present their indictment thereof to the Court.

SEC. 90. If any person intrusted, according to the provisions of this chapter, with the care, charge or management of any money, land or other property, belonging to any town or school district for the use of schools, shall embezzle, misapply or conceal the same, or any part thereof, he shall be liable to be removed from his trust, and shall forfeit to such town or district, as the case may be, a sum double the amount so embezzled, misapplied or concealed, to be recovered in an action on the case in the name of such town or district, with costs.

UNITED STATES DEPOSIT MONEY.

SEC. 91. The Treasurer of this State shall be authorized to receive any moneys belonging to the United States, hereafter to be deposited with this State, and to give a certificate of deposit for the same, according to the provisions of the existing law.

SEC. 92. All such moneys belonging to the United States, which have been heretofore, or which shall hereafter be received by the Treasurer of this State by deposit from the United States, shall be apportioned to and continue to be distributed and deposited with the several towns in the State, organized and unorganized, and to the gores of land in proportion to the number of inhabitants in each, according to the census of the United States, of the year one thousand eight hundred and sixty : Provided, however, that the treasurer of the State shall hold in trust so much of such money as shall appertain to such unorganized towns and gores, to be put to interest for the use of such unorganized towns and gores, as he shall deem most expedient ; and he shall pay so much of the interest thereof annually, as may be apportioned to the population thereof, to such unorganized towns and gores as may be entitled to the same, for having maintained a school or schools therein the previous year; the inhabitants of said unorganized towns and gores being hereby authorized to form themselves into districts for the support of schools, and the payment of such interest shall be made to the treas-

urers of such districts ; and if there be more than one school district in any unorganized town or gore, the same rate shall be observed in apportioning the money among the districts, as is provided for in organized towns.

SEC. 93. It shall be the duty of the treasurer of the State to see that a just and true apportionment among the organized and unorganized towns and gores shall be, or shall have been made of the public moneys so deposited as soon as may be, according to the United States census of eighteen hundred and sixty ; and whenever there shall be from time to time a new census of the population of this State under the laws of congress or of this State, a new apportionment of such moneys shall be made by such treasurer among such towns and gores as need be.

SEC. 94. Whenever it shall be found, that, upon any apportionment which shall have been made, upon the United States census of eighteen hundred and sixty, or upon any new and subsequent apportionment, any town shall have more of such monies than its just proportion, the treasurer shall have a right to demand and recover from such town the amount of such excess ; and if it shall be found that any town shall have less than its just proportion, it shall be the duty of the treasurer to make up the deficiency and pay over the same to such town.

SEC. 95. The several towns shall, at each annual meeting, elect one or more trustees, not exceeding three, in the same manner other town officers are elected, whose duty it shall be to receive, take care of, and manage the money deposited with the respective towns, and they shall, at each annual meeting of their respective towns, make a full report of the condition and situation of the deposit money received by them.

SEC. 96. If any town shall neglect or refuse to appoint such trustees, it shall be the duty of the treasurer of the State to retain the proportion, which may belong to such town, and put the same to use, as he shall deem most expedient for obtaining interest for it, and he shall annually, previous to the first day of March, pay to the treasurer of such town, all the interest or income, which he may receive for the same.

SEC. 97. The trustees of the several towns, before they enter upon the duties of their office, shall execute a bond to such towns, with three or more sufficient sureties, in such sum as the selectmen shall direct and accept, with a condition :

First, Faithfully to perform their duty in loaning, man-

aging and accounting for all sums of money, which may be placed in their charge, under the provisions of this chapter.

Second, To pay over the same, or any part thereof, as may be required by law.

SEC. 98. If any person, elected trustee according to the provisions of section ninety-five of this chapter, shall neglect or refuse to give bonds as provided by the preceding section of this chapter, his office shall be vacant, and such vacancy may be filled by the town by a new choice at any legal meeting, as in other cases of vacancy in town offices.

SEC. 99. When trustees shall be appointed by any town, as provided in this chapter, and shall have given bonds, as required in section ninety-seven of this chapter, the treasurer of the State shall pay over, to such trustees, all such moneys as such town shall be entitled to ; and the trustees shall thereupon execute to said treasurer their receipt for the same, of the tenor and effect of the certificate of deposit which the treasurer has been or shall be required to give to the secretary of the treasury of the United States.

SEC. 100. Each town, which has or shall appoint trustees, and through them shall or shall have received its proportion of the moneys of the United States, so deposited with this State, shall be accountable to the State for the return of the same, or any part thereof, whenever it shall be required by the treasurer of the State, on the requisition of the United States, or for the purpose of carrying into effect a new apportionment, in like manner as towns are accountable for State taxes.

SEC. 101. The trustees of the several towns shall loan the money deposited with such towns, in such sums and to such persons as they shall judge expedient, with sufficient personal security or on mortgage, as they may deem amply safe, taken and made payable to the respective towns, at an interest of six per cent. payable annually.

SEC. 102. The loans shall be made for a term not exceeding one year at one time ; and the money may be collected at the expiration of the period for which it shall be loaned, and be loaned anew to other persons, or the loan may be extended to the same persons for an additional period, in the discretion of the trustees.

SEC. 103. The trustees of the surplus money of the United States, in the several towns in this State, are authorized to loan the same to their several towns, agreeably to the provisions of this chapter : Provided, that the town shall, at a meeting legally warned and holden for that purpose, authorize the selectmen to borrow the same for the benefit of the town.

SEC. 104. All the income received for interest on the moneys so deposited with any towns, and all the income, which may be paid over by the treasurer of this State, for interest to any towns, when such towns shall not appoint trustees and receive their shares of such moneys, shall be annually appropriated to the support of schools in the respective towns.

SEC. 105. It shall be the duty of the trustees, annually, previous to the first day of March, to pay over to the treasurer of their respective towns all the income received for interest on such moneys; and the treasurer shall add all sums so received, and such as may be received from the treasurer of this State, for interest, according to the provisions of this chapter, to the other school moneys, and shall give credit for the same, in his account of that fund; and the same shall be distributed by the selectmen, as other moneys, to the several school districts, for the support of schools therein.

SEC. 106. If any town shall have other school funds, the income of which shall be sufficient to support schools in all the districts in such town for six months in each year, such town shall not be required, as provided in the two preceding sections, to appropriate the income of such deposit money for the support of schools; but may appropriate the same to any other use, as said town shall direct.

SEC. 107. If any town shall refuse or neglect to perform any of the duties required by the provisions of this chapter, in relation to the management or disposition of the money so deposited with such town, or the interest thereof, such town shall, on indictment and conviction thereof, forfeit and pay, as a fine to the treasurer of the county, in which such town shall be situated, and for the use of such county, a sum not exceeding double the amount of the interest of such moneys.

SEC. 108. It shall be the duty of the grand jury, empanelled before any county court, to inquire into the manner in which the several towns shall have managed and disposed of the moneys so deposited with them, and the annual interest thereof; and, in case of any failure of any town to comply with the requisitions of this chapter, relating to such deposit money, it shall be their duty to present to the court their indictment therefor against such town; and notice thereof shall be given to such town, as is required in case of indictment for not repairing highways.

STATISTICS.

SEC. 109. The Secretary of the Board of Education is hereby required to prescribe blank forms for a school register, conveniently arranged for keeping a daily record of the attendance of children upon the school, and containing printed interrogatories addressed to teachers, and to district clerks, for the procurement of such statistical information as the board may seek to obtain in each year ; and such information as will enable the selectmen of any towns interested to divide the public money in districts composed of fractional parts of two or more towns, according to the provisions of this chapter, and in the month of January of each year, the secretary shall procure and furnish to the town clerk in each town in this State, a sufficient number of such registers to supply each district clerk in said town with one register for each school in his district for the ensuing school year. And it is hereby made the duty of each town clerk to receive such registers for his town, and immediately forward by mail to the secretary his receipt therefor ; and, on failure to receive such registers by the first day of February in each year, the town clerk shall immediately notify the secretary thereof, who shall supply the deficiency forthwith. And it is made the duty of each district clerk during the first week in March annually, to procure of the town clerk a register for each school in his district and be responsible for the safe keeping thereof.

SEC. 110. It is hereby made the duty of every teacher of a common school or of a union school, before he commences his school, to procure from the clerk of the district in which he shall teach, a school register, and therein keep a true record of the daily attendance of each scholar who may attend such school, while under his instruction, in accordance with the form prescribed in such register, and at the close of his school shall enter in said register correct answers to all statistical inquiries therein addressed to teachers, and return such register to the district clerk previous to the receipt of his wages as such teacher. And it is hereby made the duty of each district clerk to comply with all the requirements made of him in the register or registers of his district in reference to the statistics of his district, and make oath to the correctness of his returns before a justice of the peace of the county in which he resides, and file said register or registers in the office of the town clerk, on or before the 20th day of March in each year ; and no portion of the public money in any town shall be distributed in any district whose school register or registers

REVISED SCHOOL LAW.

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shall not be properly filled out and filed in the town clerk's office, pursuant to the provisions of this chapter.

[The several teachers of common schools in this State shall faithfully keep all the records required by section one hundred and ten, chapter twenty-two of the General Statutes, and shall make correct answers to all statistical inquiries required by said section, and shall make due return thereof to the district clerk or such person as he may designate; and no prudential committee shall be authorized or allowed to pay such teachers for their services until the register properly filled up and completed shall be so returned.

It shall be the duty of the clerk in each school district in the State to make a list annually of the number and names of the children resident in his district, on the first day of January, between the age of four and twenty years, with the names of heads of families and number of children in each, and return the same to the town clerk during the said month of January.]

Sec. 111. It shall be the duty of the town clerk of each town, annually, on or before the first Tuesday of April, to prepare an abstract of the returns of the several district clerks, and deliver the same to the town superintendent of schools when called for—which abstract shall be, as near as may be, in the following form :

Districts.	No. heads of fami- lies.	No. child- ren of school age.	Weeks taught by males.	Weeks taught by fe- males.	Wages paid males.	Wages paid females.	Cost of board.
No. 1.							
" 2.							
" 3.							
	Cost of fuel, &c.	Share of public money.					

The foregoing is a true statement of the statistics of the common schools in the town of _____ as obtained by me from the returns of the district clerks, made to me on the first Tuesday of April, A. D. 18 _____

Attest,

C. D., *Town Clerk.*

Sec. 112. Town superintendents of schools shall, annually, on or before the tenth day of April, make out and return to the secretary of the Board of Education, the statistics of the schools in each district, in their respective towns, in accordance with the forms prescribed by said secretary, agreeably to the provisions of this chapter. And the secretary is directed on the receipt of such return, to forward a certificate thereof to the superintendent making the return.

Sec. 113. It is hereby made the duty of the trustees of all the academies and grammar schools, which have been incorpo-

rated by the legislature of the State of Vermont, to cause their principals to return to the secretary of the Board of Education, on or before the first day of April, in each year, true and correct answers to such statistical inquiries as may have been addressed to them by the secretary in the month of January previous.

SCHOOL HOUSES AND YARDS.

88 Vt. 271.

SEC. 114. Whenever it shall be determined in any school district in what place in said school district the school house shall be located, and the owner or owners of the land upon which it is proposed to locate such house, including, also, sufficient land for school house yards, and convenient and necessary out-buildings, shall refuse to sell and convey the same, by deed, to such district, or shall, in the opinion of the prudential committee of such district, demand an unreasonable sum therefor; and also, whenever in the opinion of any school district, expressed by vote of such district, at a legal meeting warned for that purpose, it shall become necessary to have more land attached to the school house of such district, for the accommodation and convenience of the same, or to enlarge the grounds or lands belonging to and adjoining such school house lands, such district may purchase for the use of the same, such lands as may be necessary for the accommodation and convenience of the same; and if the owner or owners of such land shall refuse to convey the same by deed, to said district, or in the opinion of such district shall demand an unreasonable sum therefor, such district, by their prudential committee, in any of the aforesaid cases, may apply to the selectmen of the town in which such district is located, whose duty it shall be to locate and set out such lands as may be required for any of the aforesaid purposes, and when the same shall have been determined upon by them, to cause the same to be surveyed; and they shall proceed to ascertain what damages shall be sustained by the owner or owners of the same; but before they shall determine the amount of damages which any one may sustain, they shall cause him to be notified of the time and place of hearing, either personally or by leaving written notice at the residence of such owner or owners of the land; and when they shall have completed their inquiries, they shall make their report, stating particularly all their proceedings and decision, with their survey and appraisal of damages, if any, and shall file the same in the town clerk's office in the town where such lands are situated, and shall cause the same to be there recorded.

SEC. 115. Before the school district shall enter on such lands it shall pay, or tender to such owner or owners, the amount of such damages so appraised by said selectmen.

SEC. 116. If the owner or owners of such land shall not accept the damages so appraised by said selectmen, the prudential committee of such district, on behalf of such district, may agree with the owner or owners of such land, to refer the question of damages to one or more disinterested persons, whose award shall be made in writing and shall be final.

SEC. 117. If any person interested in the land, which the selectmen may have located and set out, as aforesaid, shall be dissatisfied with such location, or with the compensation awarded for his damages, he may make his application in writing by petition to the county court in the same county, and at their next stated term, if there should be sufficient time for notice, and if not, to the next succeeding term, and any number of persons aggrieved may join in the petition; and the petition, together with a citation for that purpose, shall be served on one or more of the prudential committee of such school district, at least twelve days before the session of the county court, and the court shall appoint three disinterested commissioners to inquire into the convenience and the necessity of such school house, and the manner of its location, and of the necessity of such lands and the amount required, as well as the matter of damages which may have been sustained by the persons interested therein.

SEC. 118. The commissioners shall give six days' notice to one or more of the prudential committee of such school district, of the time and place when and where they will make such inquiry, and hear the parties; and on the report of such commissioners, the court may establish or set aside such location, or such parts thereof as shall appear just, and may render judgment for the petitioner to recover against such school district such sum for damages as shall appear to said court to be just and reasonable, and the court may tax costs for either party as shall appear to be just.

SEC. 119. When application shall be made to the county court as provided in the two preceding sections of this chapter, the opening of the lot of land surveyed and laid out by the selectmen shall be stayed until the decision of the county court in the premises; and such court may fix the time for opening the same and the payment of damages, and if such damages shall not be paid within the time limited, the court may award execution for the same.

SEC. 120. If any school district shall require lands for any of the purposes specified in the one hundred and fourteenth

section of this chapter, and the lands so required be encumbered by mortgage, such school district shall cause the same notice to be given to the mortgagee, or the assignee of the mortgage, that is required to be given to the owner; and the damage agreed upon or otherwise determined, as specified in this chapter, shall be paid to the mortgagee or his assignee; but if the sum due on the mortgage be less than the damage, the amount due thereon shall be paid to the holder, and the balance to the owner, on the payment of which damage a valid title shall vest in the district for the purpose aforesaid.

AN ACT directing the Board of Education to select a Text Book of the Geography and History of Vermont.

SEC. 121. The Board of Education is hereby directed to select, at its session next year after the passage of this act, some book or books to be used in the district schools of this State, as text books of the geography and history of Vermont, which selection shall be published as soon as may be in all the newspapers of the State, and also inserted in each school register; and such selection, when thus made and published, shall be authoritative and binding upon the Board of Education, superintendents and teachers, until January first, A. D. eighteen hundred and sixty-seven.

[AN ACT relating to the duties of the Board of Education and the examination of Teachers.]

SEC. 1. It shall be the duty of the Board of Education to arrange two courses of study, one of which shall include all the branches required by law to be taught in the common schools of the State, and the other shall include all contained in the first course, and such higher English branches as the Board shall deem best adapted for use in the advanced classes of the common schools of the State, and forward the same to the principal of each academy in this State, and to cause the same to be published in all school registers hereafter issued, and the Board of Education shall have power to alter and revise said courses, from time to time as may be required.

SEC. 2. At each teachers' institute now required by law to be holden annually in each county in the State, there shall be holden under the direction of the Board of Education, by the Secretary of the Board, and two or more practical teachers, to be appointed by the Board from the county in which the Institute is holden, an examination of all such persons as shall present themselves, in either or both of the courses established as aforesaid. And said Board are authorized to give

to each person who shall present satisfactory evidence of good moral character, and pass a thorough examination in the first course, a certificate which shall entitle the holder to the right to teach in the common schools of the State, in any part of the State, for the term of five years from the date of such certificate; and to each person who shall present satisfactory evidence of good moral character and pass a thorough examination in both of said courses, a certificate which shall entitle the holder to the right to teach in the common schools of the State, in any part of the State, for the term of fifteen years from the date of such certificate. All such certificates shall be signed by the Secretary of the Board of Education and the persons conducting the examination under the direction of the Board. The Board shall have authority to revoke such certificates at any time on good cause shown, under such regulations as the Board shall establish.

SEC. 3. No person shall have the right to teach in any of the common schools of the State, after five years from the passage of this act, unless such person shall have such a certificate as provided for in this act; and all power of town superintendents to grant certificates is revoked after five years from the passage of this act.

SEC. 4. Persons appointed by the Board of Education to make examinations in connection with the Secretary of the Board, under section two of this act, shall receive from the treasury of the State, the sum of three dollars for each day spent in such examination, to be paid on the allowance of the Auditor of Accounts.

Approved Nov. 19, 1866.]

[AN ACT for establishing Town Libraries.]

SEC. 1. Any town or city in this State may establish and maintain a public library therein, with or without branches, for the use of the inhabitants thereof, and provide suitable rooms therefor, and make such regulations for its management as may from time to time be deemed necessary by such town or city.

SEC. 2. Any town or city may appropriate money for the purchase of books, for suitable rooms or buildings, and for the necessary expenses for such library. And such library shall contain such books as may be owned by such town or city, whether obtained by purchase, donation or otherwise.]

[AN ACT to establish a State Normal School.

SEC. 1. The Orange County Grammar School at Randolph Centre is hereby constituted and established a Normal School for the State of Vermont, for the term of five years, and the present trustees of said grammar school and their successors, are constituted trustees of said Normal School.

SEC. 2. It shall be the duty of the Board of Education to nominate a principal teacher for the school, and no person not so nominated shall be employed as such principal, but the principal, when nominated and employed, shall be allowed to select his assistants, and to provide for the discipline of the school.

SEC. 3. The Board of Education shall arrange two courses of study for the school, and wholly control the examinations for admission and graduation, and shall have power to grant certificates in the cases and with the effects hereinafter mentioned, and to revoke the same for cause shown, and in a manner to be by them established. One course of study shall include all the branches required by law to be taught in the common schools of Vermont; the other course shall include all contained in the first course and higher branches; and shall require for its completion at least one full year of study; and certificates of graduation shall be granted to all who pass the required examination in the first course or in both courses.

SEC. 4. The certificates of graduation from the lower course shall have the effect of licenses to teach in the common schools of the State for five years from the date thereof, and certificates of graduation from the higher course shall have the effect of licenses to teach in such schools for fifteen years from the date thereof.

SEC. 5. The Board of Education at its first meeting after the passage of this act, and at each of its annual meetings thereafter, shall designate one of its members whose duty it shall be, together with the Secretary of the Board, to attend the examinations for graduation and determine who shall receive certificates; and also to visit the schools at least twice a year on other occasions; and for such attendance and visits such member shall receive such compensation as is or shall be allowed for attending the stated meetings of the Board.

SEC. 6. The Board of Education shall, in their annual report, state the condition of the school, the terms of admission to it and of graduation from it, and the time of the commencement of its sessions; and they shall cause to be printed on the cover of the school registers a statement of the terms of admission and graduation, and time of the commencement of the sessions.

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SEC. 7. The Board of Education may consider similar proposals from other academies in the State, and establish not exceeding one Normal School in each congressional district, and arrange for them courses of study, conduct examinations, give certificates, nominate teachers, and generally exercise over them the same supervision as provided in this act. And the trustees of such academies as may be designated as State Normal Schools, shall be respectively trustees of such Normal Schools and have the same powers and rights as the trustees of the Normal School hereby established, provided that the State Normal School hereby established, and such others as the Board of Education may establish, shall be established and maintained without any expense to the State, excepting the payment of the Board of Education for their services.

SEC. 8. This act shall not apply to or be binding upon the Orange County Grammar School until the trustees thereof shall, in writing, notify the Secretary of State of their acceptance of the same.

Approved Nov. 17, 1866.]

[AN ACT in addition to section seven, of chapter twenty-two of the General Statutes, relating to text books prescribed for use in the District Schools of this State.

SEC. 1. The list of grammars, geographies, arithmetics, readers and spellers, which have been selected by the Board of Education under the act of the Legislature, approved November 23, 1858, to be used in the school districts of this State, with such limitations of text books in each of said branches, as the said Board have seen fit to prescribe under said act, such selection having been made prior to the first day of January, 1859, and having been published in all the newspapers in the State, in the month of January, 1859, and also inserted in each school register, and also the Geography and History of Vermont, selected by the Board of Education, under the act approved November 29, 1862, shall be and remain authoritative and binding upon the Board of Education, superintendents and teachers, until November 1, 1868, and teachers and superintendents shall recommend for use in the district schools as new books shall become necessary for instruction in the branches named, no other than the books included in said list so established.

SEC. 2. The Board of Education are hereby authorized, and it is made their duty, on or before July 1, 1867, and on or before said date every fifth year thereafter, to select a list of such grammars, geographies, arithmetics, histories of this

State and of the United States, philosophies, algebras, readers and spellers, not exceeding one book of a kind in each branch, as they shall deem best suited for instruction and use in the district schools of this State, in each of said branches; and shall cause the list so selected to be published in all the newspapers published in the State, during the month of January next following the making of such selection; and also to be inserted in each school Register issued one year from the making of such selection; which list, so selected shall be and remain authoritative and binding upon the Board of Education, superintendents and teachers, for and during five years from and after November 1, 1868, and each five years thereafter; and superintendents and teachers shall recommend for use in the district schools, as new books become shall necessary for instruction in the branches named, no other than the books included in said list so selected and published.

SEC. 3. The authority herein granted for the revision of the list of school books, is hereby so limited that the Board of Education shall not at any revision after 1868, cause to be changed, the same kind of book oftener than once in five years, and when any change of books is contemplated by the said Board under the provisions of this act, they shall request the prominent teachers throughout the State, to examine the different text books in the branches under consideration, and to furnish to the Board their opinion in writing; and when any change is recommended by the Board, they shall in their next annual report after such recommendation, publish the reasons which governed their action, together with such opinions of teachers as shall have [been] furnished them as herein provided.

SEC. 4. If at any time the publishers of any of the text books recommended by the said Board shall charge an exorbitant price therefor, or for any cause any of such books shall fail to accomplish the end for which they were recommended, it shall be the duty of the said Board to report through the Governor to the Legislature such facts, recommending such action thereon as in their judgment is required.

SEC. 5. When any change is recommended by the Board as herein provided, it shall be only a gradual change, not involving any extra expense to the pupils of the schools of the State, and the direction given by the Board shall be, that new books hereafter purchased, as new classes are formed, shall be those by them selected and prescribed.

SEC. 6. Whenever an exchange of books shall be made, under the provisions of this act, it shall be upon the conditions entered into with the publishers of any new books adopted that they shall receive all the books in the hands of book deal-

ers in this State, in good condition, discontinued by the Board of Education, and shall allow to the dealers the full trade value therefor, and shall receive all books in the hands of families or scholars in this State, discontinued by the Board of Education, in exchange for the new books ordered of the same class, allowing therefor the true value of the same according as they have or have not been used.]

OF INSTRUCTION OF THE DEAF AND DUMB AND BLIND.

SEC. 1. The Governor of this State shall, *ex officio*, be commissioner of the deaf, the dumb, and the blind: and as such commissioner, shall constitute the board for their instruction.

SEC. 2. A sum not exceeding three thousand dollars may be annually drawn from the treasury of this State, by the governor, for the benefit of the deaf and dumb, and a sum not exceeding twenty-seven hundred dollars, may also be annually drawn by him, from the treasury, for the benefit of the blind, to be appropriated agreeably to the provisions of this chapter.

SEC. 3. Until provision is otherwise made by law, the beneficiaries mentioned in this chapter shall be instructed at the following places, that is to say:—the deaf and dumb at the American Asylum, established in the City of Hartford, in the State of Connecticut, for the education of the deaf and dumb; and the blind at the New England Institution for the instruction of the blind, established in the City of Boston, in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

SEC. 4. The board of civil authority in each town shall ascertain and certify to the county clerk, on or before the first day of February, annually, the number of deaf and dumb persons and the number of blind persons in such town, their respective ages, condition and circumstances, and the ability of their parents to educate them, and whether, in the opinion of such board, such deaf and dumb and blind persons are proper subjects of the charity of this State, and whether they and their parents or guardians are willing they should become beneficiaries of either of the institutions mentioned in the third section of this chapter, or such other institution as may be provided by law, for the instruction of deaf and dumb or blind persons.

SEC. 5. Each county clerk shall make return to the governor before the first day of March in each year, of all the information he receives from the several boards of civil authority in his county.

SEC. 6. The governor shall have power to approbate and designate beneficiaries, as aforesaid; to draw orders on the treasury for any part of the appropriations provided in the second section; to superintend and direct all concerns relating to the education of deaf and dumb or blind persons, inhabitants of this State, and to allow all or any portion of the expenses of their conveyance to, and support in the institutions in which they are instructed, for such term or time as he shall deem proper, and he may, in his discretion, take bonds to indemnify the State against expenses, which may accrue in consequence of the sickness, clothing or transportation of any of the beneficiaries.

SEC. 7. Whenever any person shall be approbated and designated a beneficiary, under this chapter, the selectmen of the town in which such beneficiary resides are empowered and authorized to defray the expenses of the conveyance of such beneficiary to and from the institution in which such beneficiary is to be instructed, out of the treasuries of their respective towns, if, in their opinion, the parents or guardians of the beneficiary have not sufficient means to pay the same.

SEC. 8. The governor shall annually report to the legislature the proceedings, with an account of the expenditures incurred in the discharge of these duties.

SEC. 9. The governor of this State shall be entitled to receive from the State treasury annually, fifty dollars, as a compensation for his services in the discharge of the duties required by this chapter.

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Of union district, shall determine the ages and qualifications of the children of the associated districts who may attend the union school. 74

PUBLIC MONEY—Upon the division thereof, the orders therefor shall

- be made payable to the Treasurers of the several districts. 48
- One-third of, shall, annually on the first Tuesday of April, be by the selectmen divided equally between the common school districts; and two-thirds thereof shall be divided between the common school districts and union districts, if any in town, in proportion to the aggregate daily attendance of the scholars of such district between the ages of four and twenty years, upon the schools of such districts, but no district shall receive any portion thereof, unless there shall have been kept therein during the preceding year, school for the term of two months with other moneys than those drawn from the town treasury, nor unless the moneys so drawn from town treasury shall have been faithfully expended in payment of teacher's wages, board, and fuel, and for no other purpose. 88
- Distributive share of public money, belonging to any district shall be paid to the treasurer thereof. 88
- How distributed to fractional district, "see fractional districts." 86
- RATE BILL**—Shall be made out by the prudential committee, as soon as necessary after the vote of the district raising the tax. 47
- Shall have a warrant attached, made out by some justice of the peace, directed to the collector, and requiring him to collect the tax within the time therein limited, and pay the same to the treasurer of the district. 47
- REAL ESTATE**—All real estate taxable for school purposes shall be taxed in the district where it is situated. 45
- RECORD**—Of votes and proceedings of school meeting shall be kept by the clerk and certified by him when required. 87
- REPORT OF SECRETARY**—Shall annually be made to the Board at their annual session. 3
- 3,500 copies shall be prepared annually. 8
- Shall be ready for distribution on the first day of the session of the Legislature. 8
- How distributed. 8
- REVOCATIO**—Of certificate of teacher, may be made for incompetence to teach or to govern, or for setting an evil example. 16
- Makes such certificate thereafter, null and void. 16
- Shall be filed in the town clerk's office. 16
- STATISTICS**—Secretary's receipt for, must be exhibited to the auditor before the superintendent's account can be audited. 9
- Forms for school registers shall be prepared and furnished by the secretary for procuring statistics. 109
- [see "registers."]
- Each teacher and district clerk shall duly answer all questions in the registers in reference to. 110
- Registers shall be filled out, and filed in March annually. 110
- No portion of public money shall be distributed to any district that shall not duly furnish its statistics. 110
- SELECTMEN**—Shall appoint superintendent when from any cause a vacancy exists. 17
- Shall organize districts and how, in organized town. 22
- Of any organized town, may organize districts in an unorganized town, and how. 23
- Shall locate school house on application of the prudential committee when the voters cannot agree. 44
- Of town or towns in which a union district is situated, may locate school house of union district on the failure of union district to agree. 73
- Shall have charge and management of all real and personal estate appropriated as a fund for the use of schools in any town, unless other provision is made by law or by the grantor, and shall lease all lands and loan on annual interest all moneys with sufficient security, that are appropriated for the use of schools, and account annually for the same to the town, and may prosecute or defend all actions neces-

sary for the recovery or protection of such estate. 78

Shall, annually before the 1st of January, assess a tax of nine cents on the dollar of the Grand List, to be collected and paid to town treasurer before the 1st of March succeeding. 80

May omit the nine cent tax if the income appropriated to the use of schools after deducting one-half of the income of the United States deposit money shall equal the amount that would be raised by the nine cent tax. 81

Or may assess a tax sufficient, with such income, to equal the nine cent tax. 81

And may omit the nine cent tax if the money voted for the use of schools in the annual March meeting, together with the income appropriated to use of schools, shall equal the amount of the nine cent tax. 82

Shall annually on the first Tuesday in April divide the public money, one-third thereof equally between the common school districts, and two-thirds thereof between the common school and union districts, if any, in proportion to the aggregate daily attendance of the scholars of such districts, between the ages of four and twenty years, upon the common schools of such districts, and shall pay over their respective shares to the treasurers of such districts, provided that no common or union district shall receive any portion of such money, unless there shall have been sustained during the year preceding, in such districts, schools for the term of two months, with other moneys than those drawn from the town treasury, nor unless the moneys drawn from the town treasury shall have been faithfully expended in the payment of teacher's wages, board and fuel, and for no other purpose. 83

Shall annually in the month of April, after making division of public money, leave a written statement of the amount distributed with the town clerk. 85

On neglect or refusal of selectmen of any town to assess, collect or appropriate the tax for the support of schools provided by law, such town shall forfeit and pay to the county in which it is situated, double the amount which the selectmen were required to raise by tax. 87

One-fourth of such penalty shall be for the use of the county, and the other three-fourths shall be paid to the selectmen for the use of schools in such town. 88

SECRETARY OF BOARD OF EDUCATION—

Shall be appointed at the annual meeting of the board. 3

Shall keep a record of the doings of the board. 3

Shall hold annually one Institute in each county. 3

Shall visit all parts of the State and deliver lectures. 3

Shall confer with superintendents, and furnish them blank forms for statistics. 3

Shall prepare and present an Annual Report. 3

Shall make suggestions for the improvement of the schools. 3

Shall present information in regard to systems of instruction in other states and countries. 3

Compensation of. 6

Shall prescribe forms for a school register, arranged for keeping a record of daily attendance, and containing printed interrogatories addressed to teachers and district clerks for the procurement of statistical information. 109

Shall arrange the register so as to contain the information necessary to enable the selectmen to divide the public money to fractional districts. 109

Shall furnish annually in the month of January enough registers to each town clerk to supply each district with one register for each school in such district, for which he shall receive the receipts of the various town clerks. 109

Shall supply all deficiencies in registers when notified thereof. 109

Shall, on receipt of the statistics of the schools from the various

superintendents, forward to them a certificate thereof.	112	be immediately supplied by the secretary.	109
SPECIAL MEETING OF BOARD —Shall be called by the Governor in his discretion.	2	Of each district shall be procured by the district clerk in first week of March annually	109
SCHOOLS —Suggestions for the improvement of, shall be made in the annual report of the secretary.	2	District clerk shall be responsible for the safe keeping of the register.	109
Shall be visited by the superintendent at least once in each year.	10	Of each school shall be procured by the teacher before he begins his school.	110
Each organized town in the State shall keep and support one or more schools, provided with competent teachers, of good morals, in which shall be taught orthography, reading, writing, English grammar, geography, arithmetic, history and constitution of the United States, and special instruction shall be given in the geography, history, constitution and principles of government of the State of Vermont.	19	A true record therein shall be kept by each teacher.	110
Fuel, furniture, and all appendages and things necessary for the advantage of, shall be provided by the prudential committee.	39	All statistical inquiries therein addressed to teachers shall be answered correctly in accordance with the forms therein prescribed, by each teacher, and the register returned by him to the district clerk before he receives his wages.	110
All requisite measures for the inspection, examination and regulation of, shall be adopted by the prudential committee.		All the requirements therein made of the district clerk to be complied with by him, and the correctness of his answers to all statistical inquiries verified by oath before a justice of the peace of the county where he resides, and the register be filed by the district clerk in the town clerk's office, in the month of March annually.	110
SCHOOL DISTRICTS —See "Districts."		No portion of the public money to be distributed to any district whose register shall not be duly filled out and filed according to law.	110
SCHOOL REGISTERS —Blank forms of, to be prescribed by the Secretary of Board.	109	SCHOOL FUND —All real and personal estate in any town appropriated for the use of schools, unless otherwise provided for by law, or by the grantor, shall be under the charge and management of the selectmen, who shall lease all lands and loan with good security on annual interest all moneys and render annually their account to the town, and who may prosecute and defend all necessary actions in regard thereto.	78
Shall be arranged for keeping a record of the daily attendance of scholars, and contain printed interrogatories addressed to teachers and to district clerks, for the procurement of statistical information, and to enable the selectmen to distribute the public money to fractional districts.	109	All leases, lands, mortgages and securities belonging to the school fund shall be deposited in the office of the treasurer of the town, and rents, interest, income and all moneys received an account of same, shall be paid into the town treasury, and a separate account shall be kept thereof.	79
Shall be furnished and forwarded to each town clerk in quantity sufficient to supply to each district clerk in every town, one for each school in the district.	109		
Shall be received by the town clerk, and a receipt therefor immediately forwarded.	109		
If not received by February 1st, the town clerk shall immediately notify the secretary.	109		
Any deficiency of registers shall			

A nine cent tax on the dollar of the grand list shall be assessed by the selectmen on the 1st of January annually, to be collected and paid to the town treasurer before the 1st of March succeeding. 80

Trustees of, shall be annually elected at the March meeting in each town, who shall take care of the fund and report in regard to its situation annually to the annual town meeting. 95

If town neglect or refuse to elect trustees as provided by law, the treasurer shall retain the portion of the public money belonging to such town, and annually before the first of March, pay the income thereof to the town treasurer. 96

Trustees of, shall give bonds before they enter on the discharge of their duties. 97

If trustees fail to give bonds, their offices shall become vacant, and may be filled by election at any legal meeting. 98

Trustees, when appointed, and having given bonds, shall receive from the treasurer and give receipts for such moneys as the town may be entitled to. 99

Each town shall be accountable to the State for the return of its proportion of the U. S. deposit money when required on the requisition of the U. S. or for a new apportionment. 100

Money deposited with towns to be loaned on sufficient security taken to the town, at 6 per cent. on interest. 101

Loans to be made for a term not exceeding one year. 102

May be loaned to town. 103

Income of, shall be appropriated to the support of schools in the respective towns. 104

Income of, shall be annually paid to the town treasury before the first day of March, who shall give credit therefor, and the same shall be distributed as other moneys by the selectmen to the various districts. 105

No portion of income of, shall be distributed to any district whose register shall not have been filled

out and filed according to law. 110

SCHOOL YEAR—Begins on the first day of April, and ends on the last day of March annually. 38

SCHOOL HOUSE—Location of, in fractional district shall determine the town to which it belongs, for purposes of visitation and returns. 25

Shall be kept in good order by the prudential committee at the expense of the district. 39

In case there be no school house, the prudential committee shall provide a suitable place at the expense of the district. 39

District may locate by vote of two-thirds of legal voters present, and if the voters cannot agree, the selectmen may locate on the application of the prudential committee. 44

When located, and the owners of land refuse to convey the necessary land for school house, yard and out-buildings, or shall demand an unreasonable sum therefor, or when the owners of land refuse to convey land necessary for the enlargement of the school premises—method of procedure. 114—120

SUPERINTENDENTS—Of schools shall recommend only books from authentic list. 7

Shall be elected at March meeting. 9

Shall hold office during ensuing school year. 9

And when appointed by selectmen, during the remainder of the school year. 9

Compensation of. 9

Shall make a detailed account. 9

Shall make oath or affirmation to his account. 9

Shall present his account to the auditor of accounts. 9

His account shall be paid from the State treasury. 9

Can receive no order for his account till he exhibit the secretary's receipt for statistics. 9

Can only charge, in any visit, for twice as many days as there are schools in town. 9

Shall visit all the common schools in town, at least once in each year. 10

Shall examine into the state of

schools, and advise the teachers as to the government and instruction of them. 10

Shall adopt requisite measures for the examination, regulation and improvement of schools. 10

Shall file a copy of his account for services with the town clerk, on or before the day previous to March meeting. 10

Shall require of teachers full evidence of good moral character. 11

Shall examine teachers as to capacity to teach and govern schools. 11

When himself desiring to teach, shall obtain the certificate of the superintendent of some adjoining town. 12

Shall give public notice of examination of teachers. 13

Shall examine teachers publicly in some public place, in the months of April and May, and November, after due notice. 14

Shall invite citizens to attend the public examinations. 14

Shall examine teachers at public examinations, except in his discretion, and when applicants are prevented by sickness or other unavoidable circumstances from attending public examination. 14

Shall lodge in town clerk's office, on or before the first of February annually, a list of the names of teachers certified during the year, with the dates of their certificates. 15

May revoke the certificate of teacher on finding him incompetent to teach or govern, or setting an evil example. 16

On revoking certificate, shall deliver a copy of such revocation to the prudential committee, and to the teacher, and file the same in the town clerk's office. 16

In case of vacancy, shall be appointed by the selectmen. 17

When appointed by selectmen, to have same legal powers as when regularly elected. 17

Shall, annually, on or before the tenth of April, make out and return to the secretary of the board, the statistics of schools in each district

in their respective towns, according to the forms prescribed by the secretary. 112

SCHOOL STUDIES—Each organized town in the State shall keep and support one or more schools, for the instruction of the young in orthography, reading, writing, English grammar, geography, arithmetic, history and constitution of the United States, and good behavior; and special instruction shall be given in the geography and history, constitution and principles of government of the State of Vermont. 19

TAXES—The property of any person set to a district in an adjoining town shall be taxed in such district, and only there. 28

For support of school for four months in each year where the district offices are vacated by neglect to support at least two months school for six months after annual meeting, may be assessed by the prudential committee that shall be appointed by the selectmen. 40

On grand list may be laid by district, by vote in legal meeting legally warned, to erect or repair school house, to purchase or hire building for school house, to purchase land for school house to stand upon, and for yards, and for the erection and accommodation of the necessary out-buildings, and to support school as may be deemed necessary or expedient. 43

All real estate shall be taxed for school purposes in the district in which it is situated. 45

In the collection of district taxes, the collector may proceed in the same manner and with the same powers as may the town collector in collecting town taxes. 49

For the support of schools, shall be raised upon the grand list. 50

The payment of, may be enforced by prudential committee, who shall have the same authority therefor which the town treasurer has to enforce payment of town taxes. 51

Abatement of taxes assessed by district, to an amount not exceeding five per cent. of the tax bill, may be made by vote of two-thirds

of the voters present at a meeting legally warned for that purpose. 52

A town tax of nine cents on the dollar of the grand list shall, annually previous to January first, be assessed by the selectmen, to be collected and paid to the town treasurer previous to the first of March succeeding. 80

If, in any town, the income appropriated to the use of schools, after deducting one-half of the income of the United States deposit money, shall amount to as much as would be raised by the nine cent tax, the selectmen need not assess it, or if such income be less, the selectmen shall assess only a tax sufficient, with such income to equal the amount of a nine cent tax. 81

If the amount raised in any town by tax at the annual meeting, together with the income appropriated to schools, shall, after the deduction required, equal the amount of the nine cent tax, the same may be omitted. 82

TAX BILLS—Shall be made payable to the treasurer of the district. 48

TEACHERS' INSTITUTES—See "Institutes." 7

TEACHERS OF COMMON SCHOOLS—To recommend only books that are in the authentic list. 7

To be examined by the superintendent and obtain certificate of qualification before opening school. 11

To be allowed the time spent in attending the Institute, not exceeding two days. 18

To be appointed and agreed with by prudential committee, and to be removed by him if necessary. 39

Contract for teaching, of one who fails to obtain the certificate of the town in which the district is located before he begins his school, according to Sec. 11, shall be null and void. 60

Shall procure the register of his school before he begins his school. 110

Shall keep a true record in the register, according to the form therein prescribed; shall answer all the statistical inquiries therein ad-

ressed to him, and return the register to the district clerk, before the receipt of his wages. 110

TREASURER OF STATE—To pay compensation of the board and secretary, on the certificate of the Governor. 6

Shall receive and give certificates of deposit for the United States deposit money. 91

Shall hold in trust the share of United States deposit money belonging to unorganized towns and gores, paying them the interest thereof annually. 92

Shall cause a true and just apportionment of deposit money to be made among the organized and unorganized towns and gores, according to the United States census of 1860, as soon as may be, and when, from time to time, a new census, under national or State law shall be taken, he shall make a new apportionment. 93

When, upon any apportionment, any town shall be found to have more than its just proportion of public moneys, the treasurer shall demand and recover of it the excess, and if any town have less than its just proportion, the treasurer shall make up the deficiency. 94

TREASURER OF DISTRICT—Shall be chosen at the annual meeting, and hold office till another be chosen. 33

Shall make an annual report to the district of the amount of money received and disbursed by him. 33

Vacancy in office of, from any cause, shall be supplied by the selectmen till a new election. 35

All taxes shall, by the warrant, be made payable to the treasurer of district. 48

The distributive share of the public money belonging to each district, shall be paid to its treasurer. 83

TRUSTEES OF PUBLIC MONEY—One or more, not exceeding three, shall be elected at the annual meeting in each town, who shall receive and take care of money deposited with the various towns, and annually report to March meeting the condition and situation of the deposit

money received by them. 95

If any town neglect or refuse to elect such trustees, the treasurer shall retain the proportion of public money belonging to such town, and annually before the 1st of March, pay the income thereof to the treasurer of such town. 96

Shall give bonds before they enter upon their duties. 97

If they neglect to give bonds, their offices are vacated. 98

Such vacancy may be filled by election at any legal meeting. 98

Shall loan the public money on sufficient personal or mortgage security, taken to the town, at six per cent. annual interest. 101

All loans shall be made for a term not exceeding one year, at the expiration of which the money may be collected, or the loan extended, in the discretion of the trustees. 102

May loan the deposit money to their towns, provided the towns, at legal meetings, warned therefor, shall authorize their selectmen to borrow the same for the town. 103

All the income arising from the deposit money in any town, shall be annually appropriated to the use of schools in such town. 104

Shall annually before the first of March, pay over to the treasurer of their respective towns all the income received for interest on deposit money, and the treasurer shall give credit therefor in his account, and the same shall be distributed, as other moneys are by the selectmen to the various districts. 105

Towns—Shall elect a town superintendent of schools at their annual March meeting. 9

Each organized town shall keep and support one or more schools, provided with competent teachers, of good morals, for the instruction of the young in orthography, reading, writing, English grammar, geography, arithmetic, history and constitution of the United States, and good behavior; and special instruction shall be given in the geography and history, constitution and principles of government of

the State of Vermont. 19

Shall form additional districts when the inhabitants cannot be accommodated in one. 20

In town meeting notified therefor, may define, determine, limit, unite, divide and alter districts. 20

Shall number districts in regular order, and cause their boundaries and all changes therein to be recorded. 21

In organized town, districts to be organized by the selectmen. 22

In unorganized town, districts may be organized by the selectmen of any organized town. 23

Two or more towns, by concurrent vote, may organize fractional districts from portions of each town. 24

May set any person, resident therein, to a district in an adjoining town by vote in town meeting. 27

Shall previously to January 1st annually, have assessed by the selectmen, a tax of nine cents on the dollar of the grand list. 80

And for neglect or refusal to make such assessment, shall forfeit twice the amount that would be raised by a tax of nine cents on the dollar of grand list. 87 and 88

If town fail duly to assess, collect, or appropriate the tax as required by law, for support of schools, it shall be indicted by the grand jury. 89

Shall, annually at annual meeting, elect one or more, not exceeding three trustees, who shall receive and take care of the deposit money of the town and annually render an account of its condition to the annual meeting. 95

If any town refuse or neglect to elect such trustees, the treasurer shall retain the town's proportion of deposit money and pay the income thereof annually to the town treasurer before the 1st of March. 96

Trustees of public money shall give bonds. 97

If trustees fail to give bonds their offices are vacated, and may be filled by election at any legal meeting. 98

Shall be accountable to the State for the return of their shares of the United States deposit money when required on requisition of the United States, or for a new apportionment. 100

May borrow the income of deposit money. 103

Shall appropriate for the support of schools all the income arising from the deposit money. 104

Unless the town have other school funds, the income of which is sufficient to support schools in all its districts for six months in each year. 106

Shall be liable to indictment for neglect or refusal to perform the duties required by law. 107

TOWN SCHOOL FUND—See "School Fund."

TOWN CLERK—To receive and file copy of superintendent's account. 10

To receive and give receipts for school registers. 109

On failure to receive registers by February 1st, he shall immediately notify the secretary thereof. 109

Shall, annually, on or before the first Tuesday in April deliver to the superintendent when called for, an abstract of the returns of the district clerk. 111

TOWN SUPERINTENDENTS—See "Superintendents."

UNITED STATES DEPOSIT MONEY—The treasurer of state shall receive and give certificate of deposit for any moneys of United States hereafter to be deposited with this State. 91

All such moneys belonging to the United States heretofore or hereafter received, shall be apportioned to and continue to be distributed and deposited with the towns organized and unorganized, and gores, in proportion to the number of inhabitants by the United States census of 1860, till another United States census be taken. 92

Treasurer shall hold in trust the shares of unorganized towns and gores, paying the interest annually in proportion to the inhabitants thereof. 92

A true and just apportionment of deposit money, among the organ-

ized and unorganized towns and gores, shall be made by the treasurer of state as soon as may be after the United States census of 1860, and so from time to time after each new census by the United States, or by State law. 93

Upon each new apportionment of deposit money, the respective shares of the several towns shall be regulated. 94

One or more, not exceeding three, trustees of deposit money shall be annually elected in each town at March meeting. 95

If town neglect or refuse to elect trustees, the treasurer shall retain its portion and annually pay the interest thereof to the town treasurer. 96

Trustees of, to give bonds. 97

If trustees neglect to give bonds their offices become vacant, and may be filled at any legal meeting. 98

Each town shall be responsible to the State for the return of its share of United States deposit money when required on requisition of United States, or for a new apportionment. 100

The income of deposit money in each town shall be loaned on sufficient personal and mortgage security, to be taken to the town, at six per cent. annual interest. 101

Loans of, shall be made for a term not exceeding one year at a time. 102

Income of, may be loaned to the various towns under certain conditions. 103

Income of, in each town shall be annually appropriated to the support of schools. 104

Trustees shall annually before the 1st of March pay over to town treasurer all the income, and treasurer shall give credit therefor, and same shall be distributed as other moneys by the selectmen to the various districts. 105

Need not be so appropriated to the use of schools if the town has other school funds the interest of which shall be sufficient to support six months school in all the dis-

tricts in town. 106

UNION DISTRICTS—Any two or more contiguous districts may unite and form a union district, for the support of a union school, by vote of two-thirds of the voters present at meetings legally warned in each district for that purpose. 66

As to that portion of the public money distributed for the attendance of scholars in the towns where they are located, union districts shall be accounted as common school districts and receive a proportionate share of public money under the regulations provided for common school districts. 67—74

Shall be bodies corporate like common school districts, and be called by such name as the district at its first meeting shall determine. 68

First meeting of, shall be called at such time and place as the associate districts respectively, shall, by vote of same determine. 69

At first meeting shall choose a clerk with usual powers and duties, who shall hold office till another be chosen. 70

Annual meeting of, shall be held on the first Wednesday after the last Tuesday in March annually. 71

Officers of, shall be chosen at annual meeting, and shall hold office one year and till others be chosen. 71

May, at any legal meeting called therefor, raise money to erect, repair, rent or purchase building for school house and for land for same, and for purchasing fuel, furniture and other necessary articles, and in assessing and collecting taxes therefor, like proceedings shall be had as in common school districts. 72

May determine the location of school house, and if the district do not determine its location, it may be referred to the selectmen of town or towns in which the uniting districts are situated. 72

May choose committee to carry the provisions made into effect. 72

Chairmen of the prudential committees of the uniting districts shall constitute the prudential committee

of the union district, the union district adding one when the number of uniting district is even. 73

Schools shall continue to be maintained in each of the uniting districts, after forming a union district, as if no provision for the formation of a union district were made. 74

At annual meeting shall choose moderator, collector, and treasurer, all with the same powers and rights, and duties that pertain to similar offices in common school districts. 75

Such officers shall hold office till others be chosen. 75

May raise money to pay teacher's wages at any legal meeting called therefor. 75

Any united district, or district forming part of union district, being dissatisfied, may withdraw therefrom by concurrent vote of two-thirds of the voters present at legal meetings, both of the union district and dissatisfied district, but the inhabitants of the dissatisfied district shall not vote at the meeting of the union district on the question of withdrawal. 76

Any contiguous district, by vote of two-thirds of legal voters thereof at a meeting thereof duly warned therefor, may join and become a member of a union district, if said union district by a majority of two-thirds of the voters present at a legal meeting warned therefor, shall vote to receive such contiguous district. 77

VACANCY—In the board or office of secretary may be filled by the board. 5

In the office of superintendent, from any cause, to be filled by the selectmen. 17

In office of prudential committee on account of neglect or refusal to provide a school within two weeks from time appointed by district, may be filled by vote of legal school meeting warned therefor. 30

In office of clerk, collector, treasurer, or prudential committee from any cause, shall be supplied by the selectmen until a new election. 35

Will be caused in all the offices of the district by a neglect of six

months after its annual meeting to support at least two months school. 40

And such vacancies shall, on application of two voters, be filled by the selectmen. 40

VOTER IN SCHOOL MEETING—Any man shall be, who is of the age of 21 years, and shall reside and be liable to pay taxes in the district. 29

WARNING—For school meeting shall be issued by the clerk, or in his absence by the prudential committee, on application in writing of three or more legal voters in district, and posted in one or more of the most public places in the dis-

trict, specifying the time, place and object of the meeting, at least seven and not more than twelve days before the time specified for the meeting. 41

For annual meeting, may be issued by the clerk, or in his absence or neglect by the prudential committee without any application by voters. 42

WARRANT—On tax bill shall be made out by some justice of the peace of the county, and directed to the collector, requiring him to collect the tax therein, within the time therein limited, and pay the same to the treasurer of the district. 47

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AN ABSTRACT OF THE DECISIONS
OF THE
SUPREME COURT OF VERMONT,
OF QUESTIONS ARISING IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE SCHOOL
LAWS OF THE STATE, ARRANGED ALPHABETICALLY, BY TOPICS.

COLLECTOR.

SEC. 1 The *Collector* of a school district, in order to justify, must not only show his rate-bill and warrant, but also the organization of the district, the appointment of the committee, and the vote laying the tax. Unless the authority of the collector be shown, an assistant acting under the direction of the collector will not be justified. (1 Vt.—p. 81.)

SEC. 2. The *Collector* of a school district tax is liable in trespass for seizing property by virtue of his warrant and rate-bill, if the district have no power to grant the tax ; or if there be any illegality in voting it ; although such warrant and rate-bill are regular on their face. (4 Vt.—p. 601.)

SEC. 3. A District *Collector* holds his office for one year, and until another is chosen in his stead. If the office is vacant, the district may appoint a new collector ; but while he is collector, his duties cannot be assigned to another, nor any part of them ; and, of course, the district can make no temporary appointment, or choose a collector to collect one tax or the arrearages. (11 Vt.—p. 618.)

SEC. 4. A *Collector* of a school district, distraining property to satisfy a tax, need not sell the property in his district ; if sold in the town it is sufficient. (16 Vt.—p. 439.)

A *Collector* having called upon one legally assessed, and being refused, is not bound to give further time. (9 Vt.—329, and 26 Vt.—381.)

CERTIFICATES TO TEACHERS.

SEC. 5. The Statute of 1827, requiring school teachers in the several towns to obtain certificates of their qualifications was intended to make such certificates pre-requisites to the performance of any legally meritorious service in that capacity. (12 Vt.—p. 192.)

SEC. 6. The plaintiff contracted to teach school for the defendants, and on the morning of the day he commenced, and before commenc-

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ing his school, he applied to the Superintendent for examination and certificate ; but the examination was, at the request of the Superintendent, and upon his assurance that it would be as well, postponed until evening ; at which time, after the commencement of his school, an examination was had and a certificate given ; and after this the school proceeded for about seven weeks without objection, and without any new contract being made. *Held* that there was a substantial compliance with the statute requiring a certificate to be obtained before the commencement of the school, and that, in any view of the case, the certificate would be sufficient for the school kept after, if not for the same day it was given. (28 Vt.—p. 576.)

SEC. 7. A certificate of school teacher's qualifications which is made out and signed by the Town Superintendent at its date, and is thereafter kept by him to be delivered whenever called for, will take effect from its date, though not delivered till long after ; the act giving the certificate its effect and validity, being the decision of the Superintendent respecting the teacher's qualifications. 29—433.

SEC. 8. The statute (Com. Stat. page 144, sec. 12) makes it a *condition precedent* to any valid contract for teaching a common school, that the teacher obtain a certificate of qualification from the Town Superintendent ; and a teacher, in order to recover his wages of a school district, must first show a compliance with this requirement. (Welch & Brown v. Vose & Tr., School District.) 30—586.

The mere fact that there was ill feeling between the Town Superintendent and the teacher, is no excuse for not obtaining such certificate. 29—433.

EDUCATION.

A good common school education is now fully recognized as one of the necessities for an infant. (Royce, J., 16 Vt. 683.)

EVIDENCE.

SEC. 9. The true time of the execution of a written instrument, which has a false date, may be shown by parol. 27—281.

SEC. 10. That a written instrument, which purports to be a written certificate, never had any legal existence, or binding force as such, may be shown by parol. 27—281.

SEC. 11. The certificate given to a teacher by a Superintendent of Common Schools, and the effect to which it would otherwise be entitled, may be impeached by parol testimony, showing that it was given when the teacher was not entitled to it, under an assurance that no legal use should be made of it. 27—281.

SEC. 12. The organization and existence of a school district, and that a certain person was its Prudential Committee, may be proved by reputation, by the fact that such district has exercised corporate power as a district, and that such person acted as a Prudential Com-

mittee without the production of the records, where the questions arise collaterally, and in proceedings to which the district is, in no way a party. 27—755.

SEC. 13. Where by the pleadings it is admitted that certain persons were, at a particular time, the Prudential Committee of a school district, testimony to show they were not, is inadmissible; but testimony showing the identity of particular persons with those named in the pleadings, is proper. 29—188.

GRANT.

A Legislative grant for the purpose of education cannot afterwards be controlled by the Legislature. 11 Vt. 632.

GRAND LIST.

The Grand List of a town does not become the legal basis of taxation until the majority of the Listers have signed and sworn to a certificate thereon, as required by law. 32 Vt. 285.

OFFICERS OF DISTRICT.

SEC. 14. School district officers, elected at an annual meeting of the district will hold their offices until others are elected at another annual meeting to supersede them; and it makes no difference whether the second is a few more or a few days less than one year from the time the first meeting was held. 26—413; 32 Vt.

SEC. 15. It is not necessary that the Moderator chosen at the annual school meeting should preside at all subsequent meetings of the district during the year; the proceedings will be valid if the district should, at a subsequent meeting, elect a moderator to preside over that meeting. 26—503.

SEC. 16. A public officer is entitled to reasonable intendment in his favor, the same as are applied to the proceedings of courts. 26—503.

PLEADING.

SEC. 17. In an indictment against a town for the neglect of the Selectmen to assess the three-cent school tax, under the act of 1827, the duty of the Selectmen, and their neglect should be stated, and also, that there was no legal excuse for such neglect, and that the town had no funds equal to any part of the sum to be raised, if the neglect relied on is that the Selectmen neglected to raise the whole tax. 13—565.

SEC. 18. In an action of trespass, where the declaration contains several counts, a plea which commences and concludes in bar of the action generally, and the obvious and natural import of the language of which should be understood in a plural and distributive sense, as

applying to the different occasions on which the trespasses are charged, must be taken as a plea to the whole declaration.

A plea to the whole declaration, to be sufficient, must appear to contain an answer to all that is alleged as the direct ground and gist of the action, and such answer must be valid and sufficient in law.

Matter of aggravation, correctly understood, does not consist in acts of the same kind and description as those constituting the gist of the action, but is something done by the defendant, on the occasion of committing the trespass, which is to some extent, of a different legal character from the principal act complained of.

But a declaration which charges the defendant with having struck the plaintiff a great many violent blows with a club, and with a raw hide, and with his fist, and with having with great violence shaken the plaintiff, and pulled him about, and with having thrown down the plaintiff, and there harshly and brutally kicked him and struck him other violent blows, and with having wounded him, and torn his clothes, exhibits a mere succession of acts of direct trespass, all remediable by an action of the same class, and each requiring some complete justification, or excuse, in the plea.

But a plea to such declaration, which professes to answer the "assaulting, beating and ill-treating," using the explanatory words "as in the declaration mentioned," will be considered as co-extensive with the alleged cause of action.

But it was held, that a plea to a declaration alleging such acts of trespass, which avers merely that the defendant was a school master and the plaintiff was his scholar, and that the plaintiff was insolent and refused to obey the reasonable commands of the defendant, and thereupon the defendant moderately chastised him, and which set forth no acts on the part of the plaintiff requiring excessive severity on the part of the defendant, such as resistance by the plaintiff, did not disclose a sufficient justification in law, for the acts alleged in the declaration. *Hathaway vs. Rice.* 19—112.

SEC. 19. The Supreme Court will not, on exceptions, examine a question not decided by the County Court. 20—495.

SEC. 20. An averment that the listers put the plaintiff's real estate in the Grand List at a certain sum, is a sufficiently direct and positive averment that he had a Grand List to that amount, for his real estate. 27—221.

SEC. 21. If a material averment is argumentatively made, it can only be taken advantage of by special demurrer. 31—337.

SEC. 22. If a referee find and report the legal existence of a school district merely from parol testimony "that it had been considered as a district for forty years," although such testimony is very indefinite, and open to just criticism on that account, still it is not so fatally defective as to justify a reversal of the referee's report on that ground. 30—273.

PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE.

SEC. 23. Where a school district, at their annual meeting, have decided, that they will appoint but one prudential committee, and have appointed him; they cannot at a subsequent meeting during the year, warned for that purpose, determine that the committee shall consist of three persons, and proceed to appoint two additional members of the committee. They cannot again act upon the subject, during the year, unless a vacancy shall have occurred by the death, resignation, removal, or disability of the committee first appointed. 20—487 and 23—416.

SEC. 24. The Prudential Committee refusing to do a particular act, in his official duty, in good faith, not believing it to be a duty, will not create a vacancy in the office; but if a new district should be erected, and the Prudential Committee of the old district is included within the limits of such new district, it will create a vacancy in the office. 26—503, 15—657.

The Prudential Committee of a school district have no authority, without a vote of the district to that effect, to employ counsel in the name of the district to defend a suit against an officer of the district, in which the district may be interested.

The fact that the pendency of such a suit, and even the employment of an attorney by the Prudential Committee, without authority, to defend it, are known to the officers of the district, and to the voters therein generally, has no legal tendency to show, on the part of the district, any acquiescence in, or adoption of, the employment of the attorney. 30—154.

SEC. 25. The Prudential Committee man of a school district is its general official agent, and the proper person to see that means are provided to pay the school teacher hired by him, and if, before the close of the school term, and shortly before the service of trustee process on the district as Trustee of the teacher, he, in good faith, pays the teacher his wages, although without the direction or knowledge of the district, and out of his own private funds, there being no funds in the district treasury at the time, the district may rely on such payment as against the teacher, or in its discharge as his Trustee. 33 Vt. 77.

SCHOOL DISTRICT.

SEC. 26. The existence and organization of a school district may be proved by reputation where its organization does not appear of record. All that is necessary in such cases is to show that there is a district, long known and recognized as such. 6—389.

SEC. 27. *Districts* are required by statute to be defined by geographical limits and should be described by territorial boundaries, and not by the names of the inhabitants. 8—402.

SEC. 28. *Districts*, Limits of, must be defined by the vote of the town,

or the vote must contain such directions as will render its limits capable of being definitely ascertained. 10—480.

SEC. 29. *District.* When a school district has been organized, in fact, for a number of years, and has chosen its officers from time to time, the Selectmen cannot organize it again, as an unorganized district, because doubts are entertained of the regularity of the former organization. 11—677.

SEC. 30. After an acquiescence of all concerned, for more than fifteen years in the proceedings of school districts in a town, as such, the regular division of the town into such districts, and the regular organization of such districts will be presumed.

The fact of the existence and continued operation of a school district, for the purpose of raising a presumption of its legal organization, may be shown by witnesses upon the stand, where the loss of the records of the district is shown, and it may be doubted whether such proof would not be sufficient for that purpose, without proof of the loss of the records.

A school district, after the suspension of all its functions for ten years, may properly organize anew, when required so to do by the town; and that without being, by vote of the town, set off anew and constituted a school district. 16—439.

SEC. 31. A town may by vote annex a portion of its inhabitants to a district in an adjoining town, which shall consent to receive them, but although the effect of this is to extend the corporate jurisdiction of such district, so as to embrace the persons thus annexed, together with the property subject to taxation belonging to them in the particular territory inhabited by them, yet the *territory* itself is not annexed to the district, as it is in case where a district is formed from territory belonging to the town, by a concurrent vote of both towns.

And the arrangement between a town and a district in an adjoining town, by which the town, by vote, annexes some of its inhabitants to such district, and the district consents to receive them, is not to be regarded as a compact, absolutely and perpetually binding, but as a mere license and temporary consent on both sides, and therefore subject to be revoked or cancelled by either party.

And the town, in such case, may at any time, by vote, resume its jurisdiction over its citizens, and dissolve their connection with the district, without the intervention of a board of three justices of the peace, as is required when a district has been formed from territory in two towns, by a concurrent vote of both towns. 21—402.

SEC. 32. The plaintiffs proposed to sell to defendants, who were a school district, certain land, upon which a school house was to be erected, with the restriction, that the front of the school house, when erected, should be upon a line with the front of a certain meeting house, and that no building should be erected upon the land in front of the school house and meeting house.

This proposition was made in school meeting, and the districts thereupon voted to instruct their Prudential Committee to purchase the land. The purchase was made accordingly; and in the deed, executed by the plaintiffs to the defendants, the restriction was expressed to be that no erections should be made upon said land between the school house and the highway. In the declaration in an action of assumpsit brought by the plaintiffs to recover the price, which the defendants agreed to pay for the land, this restriction was expressed in the words used in the deed. Held that there was no variance between the contract declared upon and that proved.

At the time the proposal was made for the sale to the district, the land had been unenclosed for some years, and open to the public, and one restriction imposed by the plaintiffs in their proposal, was that the land should be kept open.

In the deed it was expressed that the land should remain as a public common. And in the declaration, the restriction was expressed as in the deed. Held, that this difference constituted no objection to the plaintiff's recovery, that deed only imposed upon the district the obligation to keep the land free as it then was.

Held, also, that the plaintiffs in such suit were properly allowed by the County Court, to prove the terms upon which they so offered to sell the land to the district.

And, where it appeared, in such case, that the selectmen of the town, in pursuance of a vote of the district, had located the school upon the land in question, and that the district voted "to instruct the Prudential Committee to purchase the land designated by the selectmen for the location of a school house, at the price of \$100," and that the Prudential Committee had purchased the land at the special price, but the district should hold the land for the purpose of erecting a school house thereon, and that the school house should be so located, that the front should be upon a line with the front of a meeting house standing near, and that no erection should be placed upon the land, between the school house and the highway, but the land should remain as a public common, it was held, that these restrictions did not defeat or impair the object of the purchase, and that the Prudential Committee had power to accept a deed containing such restrictions, and that the plaintiffs might recover from the district the price of the land under a general count for land sold.

And such deed being executed with covenants of warranty, it was held no defence to such action that there was a defect in the plaintiff's title to the land. 22—309.

SEC. 33. Where, after organization into school districts, a town is divided and incorporated into two distinct towns, and by such division, a school district is divided, part falling in the old and part in the new town, neither portion of such district, so severed, can be considered as an entire and several district, or can act as such, legally. 28—421.

SEC. 34. When a school district has been formed from territory in two towns, either by concurrent vote of the towns, or by act of the legislature previous to the power to constitute such districts being conferred upon towns, *quare* whether one of the towns has authority to alter the limits of such district by setting the individuals, within such town, from such district to another district within the town.

But if the exercise of such authority by the town be inconsistent with the right of such district, such right may be waived by vote of the district; and if the district consent by vote, that an individual within its limits may unite with some other district, and such individual be set, by vote of the town, to another district, the union district cannot afterwards assess a tax against such individual. 23—626.

SEC. 35. The geographical limits of a school district must be defined by the inhabitants of the town, at a legal meeting warned for that purpose, and unless so defined the survey should not be recorded.

And when a town simply authorized a division of a school district, without defining the boundaries of the new district, it was held insufficient to show a legal division and organization of the new district, though the district voted to divide.

But, where a division was in fact made and recorded, and the town afterwards recognized or ratified the same, it was held, that this was sufficient to render the division legal and binding upon the inhabitants of the town and district. 25—311.

SEC. 36. The plaintiff built a school house for the defendants, under the employment, upon a *quantum meruit*, of one member only of their building committee, who, it was claimed, could not act without the concurrence of his associates, and that the committee could not bind the district to an amount exceeding \$100. The school house was worth \$200, and after its completion, the defendants voted to accept it, and voted to pay the plaintiff \$105. Therefore *held*, that the acceptance was absolute, and amounted to a ratification of the proceedings of the committee-man, and bound the defendants to pay the plaintiff what the school house was worth. 28—8.

An article in the warning for a town meeting was "to see if the voters present would vote to set off" the plaintiff and six other persons named, "and their real estate from school district No. 5, the same to constitute a new district." Held that this was a sufficiently definite description of the real estate proposed to be set off, to bring the subject within the scope of the action of the town meeting; and that, the town having at such meeting voted "to constitute a new school district agreeably to such article in the warning, the plaintiff and his real estate were legally set to such new district."

And if an article in the warning for a town meeting be to see if the town will divide a school district and annex a portion of it to one district, and the remainder to another, the town may, at such meeting,

legally set the whole district, which is proposed to be divided to either of the districts named in the warning. 33 Vt. 219.

SCHOOL MEETINGS.

SEC. 37. A *School meeting* should have seven days' notice—a notice on the first day of the month for a meeting to be held on the seventh, is not sufficient, and the warrant for such meeting must specify the business to be done.

School meetings. Proceedings of school meetings rendered void by omissions and neglects as above. 14—300.

SEC. 38. It is not necessary to state in the warning of the school meeting for such new organization (or of other school meetings) nor in the record, that such meeting was warned upon the application of the required number of free-holders; the proceedings in this respect will be presumed regular. 16—439.

SEC. 39. A school meeting, warned without naming in the warning the hour of the meeting, is irregular, and its proceedings are void, and the defect is not cured by an adjournment to another day, naming the hour of that day.

A vote of the district, at such meeting, to raise a tax, will not justify the collector in an action of trespass against him for taking property to satisfy the same. 16—439.

SEC. 40. It is necessary that the warning for a meeting of a school district should be recorded by the District Clerk. 17 Vt. 337.

The records of a school district should not be amended on the trial of a cause. 11 Vt 618.

If it do not appear from the record of the warning, in such case, that the hour of the day for the meeting was specified in the warning, the defect cannot be supplied by parol evidence that, in the original warning, the hour for the meeting was named. 17—337.

SEC. 41. A collector, justifying under his warrant and rate-bill, cannot supply defects in the record, by parol evidence that all the legal voters were present at such meeting and voted upon the question of raising the tax. 17—337.

SEC. 42. Any fact that should be matter of record, should be proved by the record. 17—337.

SEC. 43. If a meeting of a school district be duly warned by the Clerk, without any application to him in writing for that purpose, and a meeting be held pursuant to the warning, such meeting will be legal and valid.

That provision of the statute which makes it the duty of the Clerk to warn a meeting of the district upon a written application to him for that purpose, was intended to act compulsorily upon the Clerk, and and not to withhold from him the power of calling meetings without such application.

But, if it was essential, that such application in writing should have

been made, the Court would presume that it was made. 20—487; 23—416.

SEC. 44. In computing the length of time, during which notice of a meeting of a school district was given, the same rule will be applied as in the case of service of process; either the day on which the notice was posted, or the day on which the meeting was held, will be counted. 20—487.

SEC. 45. The Court will not grant a writ of *Mandamus*, requiring the clerk of a school district to amend his records, when it appeared that he had ceased to be clerk, and has removed without the jurisdiction of the Court. 20—487.

SEC. 46. When a district does not own land, on which to erect a school house, and one article in the warning of a meeting is, "To see what measures the district will take in relation to building a school house," it is competent for the district, at such meeting, to vote to purchase land for that purpose. 20—487; 22—309.

SEC. 47. An article in the warning of a school meeting to see whether the district will have a school the ensuing winter, and to see what method the district will take to pay the expense of said school, is sufficient to authorize the district to vote a tax upon the Grand List to defray the expense of the school.

And a vote, at a meeting so warned, "to pay the expense of the school with money drawn from the town, and the residue, if any, on the Grand List of the district," will authorize the committee to make a rate-bill upon the Grand List of the district, for a sum sufficient to pay the excess of the expense of the school above the amount raised from the town, whenever the amount shall be ascertained.

And it will not affect the validity of the rate-bill, that it is made for an amount exceeding, by some small sum, the actual amount of the expense of the school above the amount received from the town. 23—416.

The Clerk of a town or other municipal corporation while in office, and having the custody of the records, may generally make them conformable to the facts by altering or amending them, and this, although he may have been out of office, but is again restored.

But such alterations or amendments should ordinarily be made by original document or minutes, and not upon the testimony of third persons, or upon the clerk's own recollection, unless in very obvious cases of omission or error. 27 Vt. 207.

SCHOOL HOUSE.

SEC. 48. By implication, the Prudential Committee of the school district must have the right to occupy the school house, when the school is in operation; but neither the statute, nor the implications growing out of the general powers and duties of the Prudential

Committee, give him the exclusive control of the school house in his district, that power must be in the district. 24—528.

When a school district employed the plaintiff to superintend the repairs of a school house, they knowing his habits and ability in this respect, held that plaintiff was entitled to recover for the work what it was worth to him to do it. 24 Vt., 297.

SEC. 49. When a district, at a meeting for that purpose, voted to have a private school in the school house, and nothing appeared, but that, if it had been permitted to proceed it would have answered all the purposes of a public school, and been open to all the children in the district, and taught all the branches of common school instruction enumerated in the statute, and no others; under these circumstances it was held that there was nothing inconsistent with the right of the district, in allowing the school to continue there *for the time being merely*; but the district clearly could not confer any exclusive right to the possession of the school house, for any definite time, upon any one.

It was also held, that the privilege, which conferred upon the plaintiffs, was of a legally beneficial character, and the defendants for causelessly and wantonly disturbing them in the enjoyment of the same, are liable to an action, and that *case* is the appropriate remedy.

The inhabitants of the school district have no estate in any form, in the property belonging to the district, and the district alone can bring *trespass, quare clausum fregit*. 24—528.

The taking of land for a location of a district school house is for a public use, and therefore the act of 1857, providing for taking land *in invitum* for that purpose, is not unconstitutional.

Under that act the quantity of land allowed to be taken is not limited to the mere *site* of the school house, but it also includes such adjacent land for the purpose of a yard, &c., as the selectmen or commissioners may think requisite. 33 Vt. 271.

TAXES.

SEC. 50. A *district* cannot vote a tax on a list which is not to be completed until after thirty days from voting the tax.

A *tax* voted in May, on a list not to be completed till December following, and which thus could not be assessed within **thirty days** after voting the tax, as required by statute, held to be illegal, with all subsequent proceedings to enforce its collection.

A *tax* is not necessarily void, because it is not assessed within thirty days after it is voted. 4—601.

Since the above decision, it has been enacted that "the Grand List to be completed on the fifteenth day of May for the assessment of town and highway taxes, shall be the list on which all school district and village taxes, voted on the first day of March, or at any time thereafter, within one year, shall be assessed. Sec. 1 of 66 of 1854.

SEC. 51. Under the school act of Nov. 1827, and the explanatory act of 1833, the voters in any school district may assess a tax for the support of a school, upon such scholars only, as actually attend the school, and the term "otherwise," in the former act, is to be interpreted by the practice that obtained under the original school act of 1797. 12—473.

SEC. 52. The limitation to a maximum amount of the sum to be raised in a school district, imparts sufficient certainty; and the expenses to be incurred within the limit prescribed, is a matter properly intrusted to the Prudential Committee. 12—473.

SEC. 53. The fact that a school district mistook their rights, and the location of their school house proved to be illegal, and upon indictment was adjudged a nuisance, will not affect the validity of a tax raised to build the school house. 26—503.

SEC. 54. A vote by a school district, that a tax be raised to pay the expenses of the repairs of their school house, is sufficient and valid without a limitation as to the amount of the tax or its rate per cent. 27—221.

SEC. 55. When the statute requires the real estate situated in a school district to be assessed for the district taxes, but provides for no separate valuation of that portion of an individual's real estate which is situated in the district, it is competent for the Prudential Committee to make the assessment upon such a proportion of the general valuation of all the individual's real estate, in the town, as the value of his real estate in the district bears to that of the whole. 27—221.

SEC. 56. A school district may sustain an action against the listers, if they designate any part of the property which belongs to and is taxable in their district, as belonging to another school district, so that the plaintiff district is deprived of the benefit of the list upon that property in the assessment of their taxes.

If such a designation has been wrongfully made, the listers will be liable if they refuse or neglect to correct it, when requested by a special committee of the injured district, though no request be made by the Prudential Committee. 27—650.

SEC. 57. The appraisals and assessments which listers are commissioned to make (as also whenever it is the evident intention of the law that they shall act solely upon their own judgment and discretion) are of a judicial character, and they incur no personal responsibility, when not actuated by malice.

But in regard to the other duties enjoined upon the listers, their acts, for the most part, if not universally, are ministerial.

The duty of the listers, under the act of 1847, "to set in the list the appraised value of all real and personal estate in each school district severally," was in its character, wholly ministerial. 24—4.

SEC. 58. And when members of a firm carried on business in school district No. 1, and their personal property on the 1st day of

April, 1848, was in said district, except what they had sent abroad for sale, it was held that the statute does not authorize an ideal separation of their joint property, so as to set a portion of the property in school district No. 2, where one of the partners resided; but the property should be designated as being in school district No. 1, where a portion was actually situated—where the partnership business was carried on and where a majority of the partners actually resided.

And if the firm suffer any injury or damage from the listers setting their property, or a part thereof, in some other school district, they will be liable, and the firm can sustain an action against them. 24—9.

SEC. 59. The Grand List which by the act of 1842 (com. stat., ch. 80, sec. 50,) was required to be completed and returned to the Town Clerk's office on or before the first Monday in September, became and was on that day the existing Grand List upon which a tax voted on that day was required to be assessed.

A school district tax on that list could be voted on the first Monday of December by a school district meeting which had been adjourned to that day from a previous one.

Under the law as it was in 1844, it was the duty of the Prudential Committee of a school district in assessing a tax, to assess all the lands situated in the district, which were set in the Grand List of the Town, though they were not designated in the list of the district, and to exclude from their assessment such lands as were not in the district, though they were incorrectly designated as being there. But could not include in their assessment lands within the district which were wholly omitted in the list. 29—188.

SEC. 60. Rule for the apportionment of the appraised value of lands which were situated partly within and partly without the district. 29—188.

SEC. 61. Since the act of 1854 (Laws of 1854, p. 44.) authorizing school districts to elect a treasurer, it is proper that the warrant for the collection of a school district tax should require the money, when collected, to be paid to that officer, if one has been elected, and not to the Prudential Committee.

If an inhabitant of a school district has no list in his district, his name need not appear in the rate bill of a tax laid by such district. 30—273.

SEC. 62. A person resident in a school district on the first day of April, who is assessed as the owner of personal estate, and whose list is designated by the listers as belonging to such district, is liable to pay taxes in such district, while such list continues in force, though he has removed from the district. 31—337.

A person resident in a school district on the 1st of April and properly listed there, remains subject to taxation therein upon such list while it remains in force, notwithstanding he has subsequently removed from the district.

The neglect to comply with the provision of the statute requiring

the warrant for the collection of a school tax to specify a limited time within which the tax is to be collected, is not a defect of which a person taxed can take advantage ; and though it may render the warrant informal and defective as between the district and the collector, it does not invalidate the action taken by the latter to collect the tax. 32 Vt.

TEACHERS.

SEC. 63. The right of a schoolmaster to correct his scholar has always been practically and judicially sanctioned. But it rests upon similar ground as the right to correct a child or a servant, and the chastisement must not exceed the limits of a moderate correction. And though courts are bound, with a view to the maintenance of necessary order and decorum in schools, to look with all reasonable indulgence upon the exercise of this right, yet, whenever the correction, as confessed by the pleadings, or as proved on trial, shall appear to have been clearly excessive and cruel, it must be judged illegal. 19—102.

SEC. 64. In an action brought by a school teacher, *vs.* a school district, to recover pay for having taught the district school, evidence that a majority of the voters in the district were dissatisfied with the plaintiff, and that the plaintiff and the Prudential Committee who employed the plaintiff knew this, at the time the plaintiff was employed, is inadmissible. 20—487.

SEC. 65. The power of employing and dismissing teachers in school districts, is, by law vested in the Prudential Committee ; and the district have no power over the subject. A teacher who has been employed by the Prudential Committee to teach the school, is entitled to all the benefit of the contract unless he have relinquished it, or been guilty of some dereliction of duty, or failure to perform his part of the contract. The district have no power, by vote, to annul the contract. 20—487.

SEC. 66. Where a teacher contracted to instruct a district school during a specified time, and during the time he was absent ten days at one time, without the previous consent of the Prudential Committee, and he closed the school a few days before the time agreed upon, and this also without the previous consent of the Prudential Committee, but it appeared that he had sufficient reason, in both instances, for so doing, and that the Prudential Committee, when the cause was made known to him, was entirely satisfied, it was held that the teacher was entitled to recover pay for the time during which he actually taught, at the same rate of compensation agreed upon for the entire time. 20—487.

SEC. 67. Nor can the committee dismiss a teacher except for good and sufficient cause. 20—487.

SEC. 68. When the teacher of a district school, without use of any fraudulent or improper means, has obtained a certificate of his qualifications, in due form, from the Superintendent of Common

Schools, for the town, it is no defence to an action brought by the teacher against the district, to recover his wages, that the certificate was granted without any examination having been in fact made by the Town Superintendent. 20—495.

SEC. 69. The statute requires every teacher to obtain a certificate of his qualifications before he opens his school; and the obtaining of such certificate is a *pre-requisite* to a right of action for his services as teacher.

And the fact that the teacher was a minor, and that the Superintendent was sick and diseased, and no Superintendent was appointed to fill the vacancy till after his school commenced, cannot supersede the statute.

And the Prudential Committee have no power to waive the requirements of the statute, nor can the Prudential Committee bind the district, by contract with the teacher, that he may teach the school without procuring a certificate of his qualifications. 26—115.

SEC. 70. The teacher of a private school has the right to require a scholar, who is guilty of insubordination and misconduct, to leave the school; and if the scholar refuse to do so, upon being requested, a third person will, upon the request of the teacher, be justified, as the servant and agent of the teacher, in using the necessary force for removing him. 27—755.

SEC. 71. The fact that scholars and parents are dissatisfied with a school teacher, is no sufficient cause for dismissing him before the expiration of the time for which he has been employed. Evidence to show such dissatisfaction is, therefore, inadmissible in an action to recover damages on account of such dismissal. To justify it, actual incapacity or unfaithfulness must be shown. 28—576.

SEC. 72. A school teacher who contracts to teach for a definite term and leaves before the term is finished, without excuse, cannot recover anything for his part performance. 29—217.

SEC. 73. Though a schoolmaster has in general no right to punish a pupil for misconduct committed after the dismissal of school for the day, and the return of the pupil to his home, yet he may, on the pupil's return to school, punish him for any misbehavior, though committed out of school, which has a direct and immediate tendency to injure the school and to subvert the master's authority.

A schoolmaster is not relieved from liability in damages for the punishment of a scholar which is clearly excessive and unnecessary, by the fact that he acted in good faith, and without malice, honestly thinking that the punishment was necessary both for the discipline of the school and the welfare of the scholar.

But if there is any reasonable doubt that the punishment was excessive, the master should have the benefit of it.

Upon the question whether the punishment of a pupil by his master was excessive or not, evidence that the ordinary management of the latter as a teacher was mild and moderate is not admissible.

It *seems*, however, that such evidence would be admissible in regard to the question whether the punishment was wanton and malicious.

Whether a rawhide is a proper instrument of punishment of a pupil by his master is for the jury to decide, in consideration of all the circumstances of the case.

Upon the question whether a school teacher acted maliciously in the punishment of a scholar, it is competent for the former to show that in other schools in the vicinity the same instrument of punishment is used as that resorted to by him.

In trespass against a school master for the punishment of a scholar on account of misconduct out of school, it was held that it was competent evidence against the charge that the punishment was excessive, to show that at a former trial of the same case, no claim of that kind was made, but that the plaintiff then only claimed that the master had no right to punish for such misconduct. 32 Vt. 114.

SCHOOLS.

SEC. 74. A requirement by the teacher of a district school, that the scholars in Grammar shall write English compositions, is a reasonable one; and if such scholar, in the absence of any request from his parents that he may be excused from so doing, refuse to comply with such requirement, he may be expelled from school on that account.

It seems also that such requirement would be reasonable and proper in the case of the scholars in a majority of the studies prescribed for district schools by the statute. 32 Vt., 225.

TOWN SUPERINTENDENT.

SEC. 75. If Superintendent neglects, before granting certificate, to make such examination of the applicant as is necessary to afford reasonable evidence of possessing requisite qualification, he is undoubtedly guilty of a dereliction of duty. 20—495.

U. S. DEPOSIT MONEY.

SEC. 76. *U. S. Deposit Money.* The interest of the public moneys of the United States, which by the act of 1836; is appropriated to the support of common schools, is not to be taken as a part of the proceeds of the school fund, within the purview of the proviso to the 9th section of the act of 1827, entitled "An act to provide for the support of common schools"—and to go so far as a relief against the three cent tax required by law. 12—127.

INDEX TO THE ABSTRACT.

REFERENCES TO SECTIONS REFER TO SECTIONS OF
THE FOREGOING ABSTRACT.

CERTIFICATES

Of teacher's qualifications are prerequisite to the performance of any legally meritorious service by them in that capacity. Sec. 5. 12 Vt. 192. See also sec. 8. 20 Vt. 433.

- " For which application was made in the morning of the first day of school but on the motion of Superintendent was not granted till evening of the same day, indicates substantial compliance with the law, and at all events avails for one year subsequent to that day. Sec. 6. 28 Vt. 576.
- " Made out and signed, though not then delivered, will take effect from this date. Sec. 7. 29 Vt. 433.
- " Non reception of, will not be excused by existence of ill feeling between Superintendent and Teacher. Sec. 8. 29 Vt. 433.
- " Apparently legal, may be shown by parol never to have had any legal existence or binding force as such. Sec. 10. 27 Vt. 281.
- " Given to teacher not entitled thereto, under his assurance that no legal use should be made of it, may be impeached by parol. Sec. 11. 27 Vt. 281.
- " When obtained without fraudulent or improper means, will not be invalidated by the fact that no actual examination was made. Sec. 68. 20 Vt. 495.
- " Must be obtained by the teacher before he opens his school, and the minority of the teacher, or the absence or sickness of the Superintendent, or a vacancy in the office, will not supersede the statute; nor can the Prudential Committee waive the requirements of law, or bind the district by a contract with the teacher that he may teach the school without procuring a certificate. Sec. 69. 26 Vt. 116.

COLLECTOR

In order to justify, must show rate bill and warrant, and organization of District, and appointment of Committee, and the vote laying the tax. Sec. 1. 1 Vt. 81.

- " Is liable in trespass for seizing property if the tax is illegal or illegally voted, although his rate bill and warrant be regular. Sec. 2. 4 Vt. 601.
- " Holds his office for one year and until another be chosen, and while he is collector no other can be chosen, even temporarily, nor can his duties in part or in whole be assigned. Sec. 3. 11 Vt. 618.
- " Pro tempore. There can be no such officer. Sec. 3. 11 Vt. 618.
- " Distraining property, need not sell it in his district; if sold in town it is sufficient. Sec. 4. 16 Vt. 439.

- " And having demanded taxes legally assessed, being refused need not give further time. 9 Vt. 329 and 26—381.
- " In justifying, cannot supply defects in the record by parol evidence that all the legal voters were present and voted at the meeting when a tax was laid. Sec. 41. 17 Vt. 337.

COMPOSITION

An exercise in composition, in connection with Grammar and other studies, may be required by the teacher, with the assent of the Prudential Committee, and may be enforced. Sec. 74. 32 Vt. 225.

EDUCATION

A good common school education is fully recognized as one of the necessities for a minor. Sec. 8. 16 Vt. 683.

DISTRICT

While it has a legal collector, cannot appoint any other to collect any particular tax, or the arrearages, or make temporary appointments. Sec. 3.

- " Organization and existence of may be proved by reputation in cases to which the District is in no way a party. Sec. 12. Sec. 26. 6 Vt. 389, and see 16 Vt. 439.
- " Officers elected at an Annual Meeting will hold till others are elected at another annual meeting to supersede them, whether it be a few days more or less than a year. Sec. 14. 23 Vt. 416.
- " Are required by statute to be defined by geographical limits, and should be described by territorial boundaries and not by the names of the inhabitants. Sec. 27. 8 Vt. 402.
- " Limits of must be defined by vote of the town, or vote must contain directions that will render its limits definitely ascertainable. Sec. 28. 10 Vt. 480.
- " Having been organized in fact, for a number of years, and chosen its officers from time to time, cannot be organized again by the Selectmen because doubts are entertained of the regularity of previous organization. Sec. 29. 11 Vt. 607.
- " The regular division of the town into, and the regular organization of school district will be presumed after the acquiescence of all concerned in their proceedings for more than fifteen years. Sec. 30. 16 Vt. 439.
- " After suspension of all its functions for ten years, may properly organize anew at the requirement of the town, without being set off and constituted anew. Sec. 30. 16 Vt. 439.
- " The annexation by vote of a town of a portion of its inhabitants to a district in an adjoining town, does not annex the territory owned by such persons, and in this respect differs from the effect of the erection of a district from territory of two different towns, by concurrent vote of both towns. Sec. 31. 21 Vt. 402. And such an arrangement is only temporary, and can be revoked by either party. And the town in such a case, may at any time, by vote, resume its jurisdiction without the intervention of a board of justices. Sec. 31. 21 Vt. 402.
- " When A. B. proposed to a district in a school meeting to sell a certain lot to them under certain restrictions, for the erection of a school house, and the district instructed their committee to purchase said premises, upon which the selectmen, pursuant to the vote of the district, had located the school house, and the Prudential Committee did purchase said premises,

and take a deed of them, in which deed there were imposed certain restrictions, according mainly with the restrictions of the original proposition; the contract and deed were sustained, and it was held that these restrictions did not defeat or impair the object of the purchase, and that the Prudential Committee had power to accept such deed. And such deed being executed with covenants of warranty, it was held no defence to the action for the purchasers' price, that there was a defect in the vendor's title. Sec. 32. 23 Vt. 309.

- " The division and incorporation of a town into two towns, which divides a school district into two portions, severed by the line of the town division, so affects the severed portions that neither can be considered as an entire and legal district, nor can act as such. Sec. 33. 23 Vt. 421.
- " Quere, whether, when a district has been formed from territory of two or more towns by concurrent vote thereof, or by act of Legislature, either one of such towns has power to alter the limits of such district by setting individuals, within such town, from such district, to another district in such town.
- " But any exclusive rights of such district, in such respect, may be waived by vote of the district. Sec. 34. 23 Vt. 626.
- " The geographical limits of a school district must be defined by the inhabitants of a town, at a legal meeting warned for that purpose, and unless so defined the survey should not be recorded. And where the town simply authorized such division without defining the boundaries, it was held insufficient. But a division made and recorded, and subsequently recognized by the town, was held to be legal and sufficient. Sec. 35. 25 Vt. 311.
- " A contract made with one of the building committee in which the others of the committee do not concur, to build a school house, upon a quantum meruit, if completed and the district accept the house, will be considered as ratified by and binding upon the district. Sec. 36. 28 Vt. 8.
- " Alone can bring an action of *quare clausum fregit*. Sec. 49. 24 Vt. 528.
- " Cannot vote a tax on a list which is not to be completed until after thirty days from voting the tax. Sec. 50. 4 Vt. 601.
- " Can assess a tax upon such scholars only as actually attend the school. Sec. 51. 12 Vt. 473.
- " May sustain an action against the listers for designating its taxable property as belonging to another district, so that it suffers a loss thereby. Sec. 56. 27 Vt. 650.
- " Has no power over the subject of employing a teacher; that power is vested in the Prudential Committee. Sec. 65. 20 Vt. 487.

EVIDENCE

- " In justification of his acts, Collector must show rate bill, warrant, organization of district, appointment of Committee and vote laying the tax. Sec. 1. 1 Vt. 81.
- " Of the true time of execution of a written instrument which bears a false date may be given by parol. Sec. 9. 27 Vt. 281.
- " That a certificate which purports to be legal, never had any legal existence, or binding force as such, may be given by parol. Sec. 10. 27 Vt. 281.
- " Parol, may be given that a certificate was given to one not entitled thereto, under his assurance that no legal use should be made of it, and thus the certificate be impeached. Sec. 11. 27 Vt. 281.

- " The organization and existence of a School District, and that A. B. was Prudential Committee may be proved by reputation, by the fact that such District has exercised corporate power, and that A. B. acted as Prudential Committee, without the production of the records, where the questions arise collaterally, and in proceedings to which the District is not a party. Sec. 12. 27 Vt. 755.
- " Where the pleadings admit certain persons at certain times to have been Prudential Committee of a School District, testimony to show that they were not is inadmissible, but testimony of the identity of certain persons with those named in the pleadings is proper. Sec. 13. 29 Vt. 188.
- " Parol evidence that all the legal voters were present and voted at the laying of a tax cannot supply defects in the record where the Collector justifies under his warrant and rate bill. Sec. 41. 17 Vt. 337.
- " Facts that should be matter of record, should be proved by the record. Sec. 42. 17 Vt. 337.
- " Of the dissatisfaction of a majority of the voters in a district with a teacher is inadmissible, in an action brought by the teacher for his wages. Sec. 64. 20 Vt. 487, and see 28 Vt. 576.
- " That no examination was in fact made will not invalidate a certificate obtained by a teacher without fraud or improper means. Sec. 68. 20 Vt. 495.

EXCEPTIONS

Supreme Court will not on exceptions, examine a question not decided by the County Court. Sec. 19. 20 Vt. 495.

GRANT

A Legislative grant for the purpose of education cannot afterward be controlled by the Legislature. 11 Vt. 632.

GRAND LIST

The Grand List is not a legal basis for taxation till signed and sworn to by a majority of the Listers, as required by law. 32 Vt. 285.

LISTERS

Are liable to district for designating its property as belonging to another district, if on request of a special committee they refuse to correct their designation though no request be made by the Prudential Committee. Sec. 56. 27 Vt. 650.

- " In making appraisals and assessments, act in a judicial capacity and incur no personal responsibility, where not actuated by malice; and the same is true wherever it is the evident intention of the law that they shall act solely upon their own judgment and discretion; but in regard to other duties, their acts are, for the most part, ministerial. The duty of the listers to set in the list the appraised value of all real and personal estate, in each school district severally, is wholly ministerial. Sec. 57. 24 Vt. 9.

MODERATOR

Chosen at annual meeting not necessarily to preside over all subsequent meetings in the year; the election of another to preside at a subsequent meeting will not invalidate its proceedings. Sec. 15. 26 Vt. 503.

NOTICE

For school meeting should issue seven days before the meeting, and should specify the business to be done. Sec. 37. 14 Vt. 800.

OFFICERS

District, elected at an annual meeting, hold till others are elected at

another annual meeting, to supersede them, whether it is a few days more or less than a year. Sec. 14. 23 Vt. 416.

" It is not necessary that the moderator chosen at the annual meeting should preside over every subsequent meeting in the year; the election of another to preside over a subsequent meeting will not invalidate the proceedings then had. Sec. 15. 26 Vt. 503.

" Public officers are entitled to reasonable intendments in their favor, the same that are applied to the proceedings of courts. Sec. 15. 66 Vt. 503.

PROPERTY

Sold to satisfy district tax need not be sold in the district taxing; if sold in town it is sufficient. Sec. 4. 16 Vt. 439.

PLEADINGS

Indictment against town for neglect of selectmen to assess the three cent school tax—what it should state. Sec. 17. 13 Vt. 565.

" In an action of trespass, where the declaration contains several counts and a plea commences and concludes in bar of the action generally, fully discussed. Sec. 18. 19 Vt. 102.

" Supreme Court will not, on exceptions examine a question not decided by the County Court. Sec. 19. 20 Vt. 495.

" An averment that the listers put the plaintiff's real estate in the Grand List at a certain sum, sufficient averment that he had a grand list of that amount. Sec. 20. 27 Vt. 221.

" A material averment argumentatively made, can only be taken advantage of by special demurrer. Sec. 21. 31 Vt. 337.

" If referee find and report the legal existence of school district from parol testimony "that it had been considered a district for forty years"—though such testimony is indefinite, report would not be reversed on that ground. Sec. 22. 30 Vt. 273.

PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE

When districts at their annual meeting have decided to appoint but one Prudential Committee, they cannot change it, or again act upon it during the year unless a legal vacancy occurs. Sec. 23. 20 Vt. 487.

" Refusal to do a certain act in good faith, not believing it to be a duty, will not create a vacancy in the office; but the erection of a new district including within its limits the Prudential Committee of the old, will create a vacancy. Sec. 24. 26 Vt. 503 and 15 Vt. 657.

" Without vote of district to that effect, has no authority to employ counsel in a suit against a district officer, in which suit the district has an interest. Sec. 25. 30 Vt. 154.

" Has exclusive power of hiring teachers, the district have no power over the matter. Sec. 65. 20 Vt. 487.

" Cannot waive the requirements of law in regard to certificates to teachers, or bind the district by a contract with the teacher that he may teach the school without procuring a certificate. Sec. 99. 26 Vt. 116.

" Is the general official agent of a school district. Sec. 25. 33 Vt. 77.

SCHOOL DISTRICT. See District.

SCHOOL HOUSE

Prudential Committee have a right to occupy, while school is in operation, but not to the exclusion of the district.

- " District at a meeting held for that purpose, voted to have a private school in the school house, and nothing appearing but that it would have answered all the purposes of a public school, and been open to all the children of the district, etc., it was held that there was nothing inconsistent with the rights of the district in allowing the school to continue for the time being merely, but that the district could not confer any exclusive right to the possession of the school house, for any definite time, upon any one.
- " The district alone can bring an action of *quare clausum fregit*. Sec. 489. 24 Vt. 528.
- " The taking of land for a school house, under act of 1857, being for public use, is not unconstitutional, and need not be limited to a mere site for a house, it may include land for a yard, &c. Sec. 49. 33 Vt. 271.

SCHOOL MEETING

Should have seven days notice, and a notice on the first day of the month for meeting on the seventh is not sufficient. Sec. 37. 14 Vt. 300.

- " The notice or warrant for, should specify the business to be done, and without such notice, the proceedings will be rendered void. Sec. 37. 14 Vt. 300.
- " It is not necessary to state in the warning or record of a school meeting, that the warning issued upon the application of the required number of freeholders; the proceedings will be presumed to be regular in this respect. Sec. 38. 16 Vt. 439.
- " Warned without specifying, in the warrant, the hour of meeting, is irregular and its proceedings are void. Sec. 40. 16 Vt. 439.
- " Held pursuant to a warrant issued by the Clerk without application in writing, will be considered legal and valid. Sec. 43. 20 Vt. 487 and 23 Vt. 416.
- " In computing the length of notice for school meeting, the rule for service of process will be applied; and either the day of posting notice, or the day of holding the meeting will be counted. Sec. 44. 20 Vt. 487.
- " May vote to purchase land for school house when warned "To see what measures the district will take in relation to building a school house." Sec. 46. 20 Vt. 487, and see 22 Vt. 309.
- " Under a warning "to see whether the district will have a school the ensuing winter, and to see what method the district will take to pay the expense of said school" may vote a tax on the Grand List to defray the expense of the school, and a vote to pay the expense of the school with money drawn from the town, and the residue, if any, on the Grand List of the district, will authorize the Committee to make a rate bill on the Grand List of the district. Sec. 47. 23 Vt. 410.
- " Records of, may, by the officer having them in charge, be made conformable to the facts by amendment; but such amendment should be made from original documents or minutes. Sec. 47. 27 Vt. 207.
- " Should not be amended on trial. Sec. 40. 11 Vt. 618.

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

If he neglects, before granting certificate, to make such examination as is necessary to afford reasonable evidence of possessing requisite qualifications, is unquestionably guilty of a dereliction of duty. Sec. 75. 20 Vt. 405.

TRESPASS

Will lie against Collector for seizing property, if the tax be illegal or illegally voted, although the rate bill and warrant may be regular on their face. Sec. 2. 4 Vt. 601.

TAXES

District cannot vote a tax on a list which is not to be completed until after thirty days from voting the tax.

" But a tax is not necessarily void because it is not assessed within thirty days after voting it. Sec. 50. 4 Vt. 601.

" May be assessed upon such scholars only as actually attend the school. Sec. 51. 12 Vt. 473.

" Raised to build a school house, will not be invalidated by the fact that the school house was illegally located and was adjudged a nuisance. Sec. 53. 26 Vt. 503.

" Voted by a district to pay for repairs on school house, without limitation as to amount or rate per cent., is sufficient and valid. Sec. 54. 27 Vt. 221. 12 Vt. 473.

" The warrant for the collection of, since the act authorizing districts to elect a Treasurer, properly requires the money, when collected, to be paid to the Treasurer, if one has been elected. Sec. 61. 20 Vt. 188.

" A resident in a school district and properly listed there on the 1st of April, remains subject to taxation therein, upon such list while it remains in force. Sec. 62. 32 Vt. 769.

TEACHER

Must procure a certificate before he can perform any legally meritorious service as teacher. Sec. 5. 12 Vt. 192.

" Who applied for examination and certificate on the morning of the first day of school but being deferred till the evening of the same day by Superintendent, and then receiving an examination and certificate, has substantially complied with the law, and at all events his certificate will avail *thereafter*. Sec. 6. 28 Vt. 576, and Sec. 8. 20 Vt. 433.

" Not excused for not obtaining certificate, by the fact that ill feeling existed between him and Superintendent. Sec. 8. 20 Vt. 433.

" Right of to correct his scholar similar to the right to correct a child or servant. But correction appearing on trial, or confessed to be excessive and cruel, is illegal. Sec. 63. 10 Vt. 102, and Sec. 73. 32 Vt. 114.

" Evidence of dissatisfaction of a majority of the voters in a district, is inadmissible in an action by teacher for wages. Sec. 64. 20 Vt. 487, and 28 Vt. 576.

" The power of employing a teacher is vested in the Prudential Committee; the district have no power over it. Sec. 65. 20 Vt. 487.

" Cannot be dismissed by the Prudential Committee without good and sufficient cause. Sec. 67. 20 Vt. 487.

" If without fraud, and by proper means, a teacher has obtained a certificate, the fact that it was granted without actual examination will not invalidate the certificate. Sec. 68. 20 Vt. 495.

" Must procure a certificate before he opens his school; and cannot be excused by the facts that he is a minor, that the Superintendent is sick or absent, or that there is a vacancy in the office, or that the Prudential

Committee consented to his commencing school without a certificate. Sec. 69. 26 Vt. 115.

- " Of a private school, may require a scholar to leave school, for insubordination, and on refusal may remove him, or cause him to be removed. Sec. 70. 27 Vt. 775.
- " Leaving his school before the expiration of the time of his contract, without excuse, can recover nothing for part performance. Sec. 72. 29 Vt. 217.
- " The teacher of a district school, with the assent of the Prudential Committee, may require an exercise in composition, in connection with grammar and other studies, and enforce such requirement. Sec. 74. 33 Vt. 225.

U. S. DEPOSIT MONEY

The interest of the United States Deposit Money is not to be taken as a part of the proceeds of the school fund, and to go so far, as a relief against the three cent tax required by law. Sec. 76. 12 Vt. 127.

WARNING

For school meeting should give seven full days notice, and should specify the business to be done. Sec. 37. 14 Vt. 300.

- " For school meeting need not state that it is issued upon the application of the required number of free holders; but it must specify the hour of the meeting. Sec. 38. 16 Vt. 429. See also Sec. 40. 17 Vt. 337.
- " Should be recorded by the District Clerk; its record should show that the hour for the meeting was specified in the warning. Sec. 40. 17 Vt. 337.
- " In computing the length of notice given in warning for school meeting, as in the service of process, either the day of posting notice, or the day of holding meeting will be reckoned. Sec. 44. 20 Vt. 487.
- " To see what measures the district will take in relation to building a school house, is sufficient to enable a district to vote to purchase land for that purpose. Sec. 46. 20 Vt. 384. See also 22 Vt. 309.
- " An article in a warning for town meeting "to see if town will set off A, "B, and C, and their real estate, from school district No. 5, the same to "constitute a new district," held sufficiently definite to bring the matter before the town meeting. Sec. 36. 33 Vt. 219.

WARRANT

An omission to specify therein a time limited for the payment of taxes, cannot be taken advantage of by tax payers. 32 Vt. 769.

FORMS

OF VARIOUS DOCUMENTS, NECESSARY IN THE TRANSACTION OF
BUSINESS CONNECTED WITH SCHOOLS.

No 1.

A REQUEST BY THREE VOTERS OF A SCHOOL DISTRICT TO THE DISTRICT
CLERK TO WARN A MEETING OF THE INHABITANTS OF SAID SCHOOL
DISTRICT FOR ERECTING OR REPAIRING SCHOOL HOUSE.

To the Clerk of School District number — in the Town of —
in the County of —

We the undersigned, inhabitants of the Town of — in
the County of — residing in school district number — and
legal voters in the same, hereby request you to appoint and notify a
meeting of the inhabitants of said school district, to consider and act
on the following propositions.

[Applicable thus far for any school meeting.]

1. To see if the District will erect a new school house in said Dis-
trict, or take measures for the repair of their present house.

2. To appoint a Committee to prepare and report a plan of such
erection or repair, with an estimate of the probable cost thereof.

3. To raise money by tax or otherwise to defray the expense of
such erection or repair.

4. To do any other business within the scope of the foregoing
propositions.

Dated at —, —, A. D. 18—

G. H. — }
R. B. — }
L. N. — }

[The above may be adapted to all varying exigencies by substitu-
ting the different specifications under Form No. 5 and others, in place
of those above inserted, or in addition thereto.]

No. 2.

FORM OF THE WARNING BY THE CLERK OF A SCHOOL DISTRICT FOR A
SCHOOL MEETING FOR THE ERECTION OR REPAIR OF SCHOOL HOUSE.

To the inhabitants of school district number — in the Town of — in the County of —

Whereas an application in writing signed by three of the inhabitants of school district number — in the Town of — has been filed in my office requesting me as the Clerk of said district to appoint and notify a meeting of the inhabitants of said district. Therefore, you, the inhabitants of school district number — in said Town of —, liable to pay taxes in said district, are hereby notified and warned to meet at —, in said district, on the — day of —, 18— at — o'clock, in the —noon of said day, to consider and act on the following propositions:

1. To see if the District will order the erection of a new school house in said district, or take measures for the repair of their present one.

2. To appoint a committee to prepare and report a plan of such erection or repair, with the probable expense of the same.

3. To raise money by tax or otherwise to defray the expenses of such erection or repair.

4. To do any other business within the scope of the foregoing propositions.

Dated at —, —, A. D. 18—.

J. D—, Clerk.

No. 3.

WARNING OF ANNUAL MEETING OF SCHOOL DISTRICT, WHICH MAY ISSUE
WITHOUT PREVIOUS APPLICATION THEREFOR.

SCHOOL MEETING.

The inhabitants of School District No. —, in the Town of — are hereby notified to meet at —, in said town, on the last Tuesday of March, A. D. 18— at — o'clock in the —noon, to consider and act on the following propositions:

[The above heading will serve for a general one.]

1st. To choose a Moderator to govern said Meeting.

2d. To choose a Clerk, Collector, Prudential Committee, and Treasurer for the year ensuing.

3d. To see if said District will vote to sustain a school or schools therein during the ensuing year, and if so, for what length of time, and from what day or days.

4th. To see if the District will vote to raise a tax upon the Grand

FORMS.

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List to defray the expenses of such school, or take other measures therefor.

5th. To transact any other proper and necessary business.

X— Y—, Clerk of District No. —.

No. 4.

VARIOUS SPECIFICATIONS OF BUSINESS TO BE TRANSACTED, THAT MAY BE
INSERTED IN ANY APPLICATION FOR A WARNING, OR IN ANY WARN-
ING, AS THEY MAY BE NEEDED.

*To divide the school of any District into two or more departments, and
provide therefor.*

[Same heading as in No. 3.]

To see if said District will vote to divide its school into two or more departments, and grade the same with reference to each other.

To see if said District will provide additional accommodations for its schools by adding to or altering its school house, or by erecting another.

To raise money by a tax upon the Grand List of such District to defray the expenses of such addition, alteration or construction.

To see what directions said District will give to the teacher of its higher school in reference to teaching in such school any of the sciences, or higher branches of a thorough education.

No. 5.

RELATING TO THE FORMATION AND DISSOLUTION OF UNION DISTRICTS.

(a) To see if said District will agree, by a vote of two-thirds of the voters thereof present at such meeting, to unite with contiguous Districts, No. —, and No. —, in said town, for the purpose of maintaining a Union School, to be kept for the benefit of the older children of such Districts as may thus unite.

Where a District wishes to unite with Union Districts.

(b) To see if said District, by a vote of two-thirds of its legal voters will vote to join Union District No. — in said town, contiguous to said District.

Where a District wishes to withdraw from a Union District.

(c) To see if said District, by a vote of two-thirds of its legal voters present, will vote to withdraw from Union District No. —, in said town.

For Union District in regard to last two cases.

(d) To see if said Union District will, by a vote of two-thirds of its voters present, permit the withdrawal of District No. — in accordance with its request.

(e) To see if said Union District will, by a majority of two-thirds of its legal voters present, vote to receive District No. — in said town, the same being a contiguous District and desiring to be thus received.

No. 6.

RECORD OF SCHOOL MEETING.

[Insert the warning for the meeting in full, including Clerk's signature, and then proceed as follows:]

I certify the above to be a true copy of the original warning.

Attest, A. B——, *Clerk.*

Be it remembered that at a meeting of the inhabitants of School District No. —, in the town of ———, held pursuant to the foregoing warning at the ——— in said District, on the — day of —, A. D., 18—, the Moderator of said District presiding.

[*For Annual Meeting of District.*]

(a) The following business was transacted.

H. K——, was elected Moderator, L. M—— was elected Clerk, N. O—— was elected Collector, P. Q——, R. S——, and T. V—— were elected Prudential Committee, and X. Y—— was elected Treasurer of said district for the year ensuing.

It was voted to sustain a school in said District during seven months of the year ensuing, viz: a summer school of four months from and after the second Monday in May, and a winter school of three months from and after the second Monday in November.

It was voted that a tax of — cents on the dollar of the Grand List of said District be assessed, and that the same be made payable on or before the — day of — then next.

A true record,

Attest, L. M——, *Clerk.*

To Erect or Repair School House.

(b) [Insert warning and commence as in Form No. 6.]

The following business was transacted :

It was, upon motion, *Resolved*, That the comfort of the children and the best interests of the District, demand the erection of a new school house.

It was voted that J. D—— and R. S—— be appointed a Committee, to prepare and report a plan for such new school house, with an estimate of the probable expense of the same, and report thereon as soon as may be.

It was voted to adjourn to the —— day of ——, A. D. 18——, at —— o'clock, P. M.

And now on this —— day of —— A. D. 18—— the meeting having re-assembled, was called to order by the Moderator.

J. D—— and R. S——, the Committee appointed therefor, made their report of a plan of a school house together with an estimate of the expense of construction, which report was accepted and ordered to be recorded, and is in the words and figures following :

[Here insert report.]

After consideration and discussion of said report, it was voted that the same be adopted, and that the Prudential Committee be directed to proceed in the erection of a house in accordance with such plan.

It was voted that a tax of —— cents on the dollar on the Grand List of said District, and payable on the —— day of ——, A. D. 18—— be assessed and collected to defray the expense of such school house.

To Divide and Grade the Schools.

(c) (Insert the warning and proceed as in form No. 6.)

The following business was transacted :

It was resolved that the convenience and economy and the interests of the scholars require, and the District hereby directs, that the school in said District be divided, and formed into two departments or grades.

It was voted that the Prudential Committee be directed to proceed immediately to make an addition to the school house of said district, upon the —— side thereof, said addition to be constructed of —— to be —— feet by —— feet on the ground, and at least ten feet from floor to ceiling.

It was voted that a tax of —— cents on the dollar on the Grand List of said District, payable on the —— day of ——, A. D. 18——, be assessed and collected to defray the expense of making such addition.

It was voted that the teacher of the higher of the schools of said District be directed to give instruction to those who desire it, in —— and —— and ——.

To unite in forming Union District.

(d) (Insert warning and proceed as in No. 6.)

It was voted that the interests of the District require that the older children should receive instruction in the higher branches of knowledge, and that opportunity therefor should be given.

It was voted by a majority of more than two-thirds of the voters present, that said District hereby declares its desire to unite with adjoining Districts No. —, No. —, and No. —, in said town, for the purpose of maintaining a Union School to be kept for the benefit of the older children in such Districts.

To unite with a Union District.

(e) It was voted by a majority of more than two-thirds of its legal voters, that the District hereby declares its desire to unite itself with and become a part of Union District No. — in said town.

To withdraw from Union District.

(f) It was voted by a majority of more than two-thirds of the legal voters of said District present, that said District hereby expresses its desire to withdraw itself from Union District No. —, in said town, of which it now forms a part.

No. 7.

APPLICATION TO SELECTMEN FOR LOCATION OF SCHOOL HOUSE WHERE DISTRICT CANNOT AGREE.

To A. B—, C. D—, and E. F—, Selectmen of the Town of —,

The undersigned, Prudential Committee of District No. —, in said Town, represent that said District, at a meeting thereof, legally warned and held on the — day of —, voted to erect a new school house for the use of the schools of said District, but are not able to agree upon a location therefor.

We therefore officially request that you, the Selectmen of —, will, in pursuance of law in such case provided, proceed to select and fix upon such a place within said District for a location for such school house, as to you shall seem best.

Dated at —, this — day of —, A. D. 18—.

L. M—,	} Prudential Com.
N. O—,	
P. R—,	
	} of
	} Dist. No. —.

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No. 8.

FORM OF A CERTIFICATE BY THE PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE, ACCOMPANYING A RATE BILL.

We, the undersigned, Prudential Committee of School District No. — in the Town of —, certify that the foregoing is a correct Rate Bill of a tax of — cents on the dollar of the Grand List of the inhabitants of said School District, and of the property in said District liable to school taxes, raised for the purpose of — in said District, and ordered to be paid to the Treasurer of said District by the — day of —, A. D. 18—, agreeably to a vote of the inhabitants of said District, at a meeting thereof legally warned and holden for that purpose, on the — day of — A. D. 18—.

Approved and certified by us, this — day of — A. D. 18—.

—, }
—, } Prudential Com.
—, }

No. 9.

FORM OF A WARRANT FOR THE COLLECTION OF A SCHOOL TAX.

STATE OF VERMONT, }
— COUNTY. }

To —, Collector of school taxes for the School District number — in the town of — in said — County. Greeting.

By the authority of the State of Vermont you are hereby commanded to levy and collect of the several persons named in the Rate Bill herewith committed to you, the sum of money annexed to the name of each person respectively, and pay the same to the Treasurer of School District number — in said town of — on or before the — day of — A. D. 18—, and if any person shall refuse or neglect to pay the sum in which he or she is assessed in said Rate Bill you are further hereby commanded to distrain the goods, chattels or estate of such person so refusing or neglecting, and the same dispose of according to law, for the satisfying the said sum with your fees, and for want thereof you are hereby commanded to take his or her body, and him or her commit to the keeper of the common jail in — in said — County, within the said prison, who is hereby commanded to receive such person, and him or her safely keep until he or she shall pay said sum so assessed with legal costs, together with your fees, or be otherwise discharged or released according to law.

Given under my hand at —, this — day of — A. D. 18—. —, Justice of the Peace.

APPENDIX.

No. 10.

APPLICATION BY THREE VOTERS IN AN UNORGANIZED TOWN TO THE SELECTMEN OF AN ADJOINING ORGANIZED TOWN, TO ORGANIZE SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN SUCH UNORGANIZED TOWN.

To the Selectmen of ———, in the County of ———, the same being an organized town.

The undersigned, inhabitants of ——— in said County, freeholders and voters in the same, show that said ——— is an unorganized town, and that no School Districts have as yet been established in the same. We therefore request that you will organize one or more School Districts in such ———, for the instruction of the young, and that you will define and determine the limits of said School Districts, and number the same agreeably to the statute laws of this State in such case made and provided.

Dated at ———, ——— —, A. D. 18—.

A. S ———
C. T ———
J. D ———

No. 11.

WARNING FOR THE ORGANIZATION OF SCHOOL DISTRICT IN AN UNORGANIZED TOWN.

To the inhabitants of ———, in the county of ———, the same being an unorganized town.

Whereas A. S ———, C. T ———, and J. D ———, three of the inhabitants of said town of ———, have by their request in writing, setting forth that said town is unorganized, and no School Districts are as yet organized therein, requested that one or more School Districts may be organized therein for the instruction of the young.

Therefore you, the inhabitants of said town of ———, residing and liable to pay taxes therein, are hereby notified and warned to meet at ——— in said town, at — o'clock in the ———noon of the — day of ——— A. D. 18— to act upon the subject matter of said petition and see if the said inhabitants will organize a School District in said town by the appointment of a Moderator and Clerk of said District, according to law.

Dated at ———, this — day of ——— A. D. 18—.

R. S ———, } *Selectmen of* ———
T. U ———, } *adjoining said town*
V. W ———, } *of* ———.

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No. 12.

**A REQUEST BY THREE VOTERS IN AN UNORGANIZED SCHOOL DISTRICT, TO THE
SELECTMEN OF THE TOWN FOR THE ORGANIZATION OF SAID DISTRICT.**

To the Selectmen of ———, in the County of ———.

We the undersigned, inhabitants of said ———, residing in School District number — in said town, and voters in the same, show that the said School District number — has not, as yet, been organized, and that the inhabitants of said District are desirous that said School District may be organized. Wherefore we make this request in writing that said School District number — in said ——— be duly and legally organized according to the statute law of this State in such case provided.

Dated at ———, ——— —, A. D. 18——.

A. B——
C. D——
E. F——

No. 13.

**FORM OF A WARNING FOR THE ORGANIZATION OF A SCHOOL DISTRICT IN AN
ORGANIZED TOWN.**

To the inhabitants of School District number — in the town of ——— in the County of ———.

Whereas A. B——, C. D——, and E. F——, three of the inhabitants of said ———, residing in School District number —, in said town, have by their request in writing setting forth that said School District has not, as yet, been organized, prayed that the same may be organized.

Therefore you, the inhabitants of ———, residing in said School District number —, liable to pay taxes in the same, are hereby notified and warned to meet at ———, in said School District, at — o'clock in the ———noon, of the — day of ———, 18——, to act on the subject matter of said petition, and see if the said inhabitants will organize the said school district number — by the appointment of a Moderator and Clerk of said district, according to the provisions of the laws of this State.

Dated at ———, ——— —, A. D. 18——.

O. D——, } *Selectmen*
S. F——, } *of*
T. H——, } ———

No. 14.

FORM OF PROCEEDINGS FOR THE DISSOLUTION OF A SCHOOL DISTRICT
FORMED OF CONTIGUOUS TERRITORY IN TWO TOWNS.

To Hon. ———, one of the Judges of the County Court for
—— County :

We, the undersigned, inhabitants of ——— in ——— County, residing in a School District called Number —, which is formed of territory lying partly in said ———, and partly in the Town of ——— in said County, and being legal voters in said School District, show to said Judge that there are prudential reasons for the dissolution of said district, and that we desire that said district may be dissolved. We therefore pray your Honor to appoint three Justices of the Peace of said ——— County, to make inquisition in the premises, and if sufficient cause therefor be shown, that they will order the said district to be dissolved.

Dated at ———, ———, 18—

A. B———,
C. D———,
E. F———.

To E. W——, H. M——, and S. T——, three Justices of the Peace within and for the County of ——— :

Whereas, A. B——, C. D——, and E. F——, of ———, in ——— County, have represented to me that the School District called Number — in ———, is formed of territory lying partly in said ——— and partly in ——— in said County, and that they desire the union of said District may be dissolved, and have made their application in writing to that effect.

Therefore, in pursuance of the statute in such case provided, I hereby appoint you, the said Justices, to make inquiry into the circumstances, and if in your opinion it shall be expedient to dissolve said District, that you order the same to be dissolved, and make the proper certificate thereof for record in the Town Clerk's office of said ——— and ———, and order such distribution of the property of said District, and the payment of such damages, if any, as shall be just and equitable.

Given under my hand at ———, this — day of ———, A. D. 18—.

———, *Assistant Judge of
County Court.*

To all whom it may concern :

The undersigned, Justices of the Peace for — County, appointed to make inquisition as specified in the within commission, having first given due notice to all parties interested, have attended to the duties assigned in our appointment, and from a careful consideration of the circumstances, think it expedient that said District be dissolved.

Wherefore, we, the said Justices, do hereby order and direct that said School District Number — lying partly in — and partly in —, be dissolved, and the same is hereby dissolved. And we further order the property of said District to be distributed as follows : that is to say, that the school house, furniture and fixtures standing in said — be assigned to the inhabitants of said district residing in said —, and that the sum of — dollars be paid to the inhabitants of said district residing in said —, by the said inhabitants residing in said —, and that the same be paid in six months from date, and we have made out and certified a copy of this our order for record in said —, and a like copy for record in said —, and herewith return this our commission with this report of our execution of the same.

Dated at — this — day of — 18—.

E. W—, }
H. M—, } *Justices of the Peace.*
S. T—, }

No. 15.

FORM OF AN EXTENT WHICH MAY BE ISSUED AGAINST THE COLLECTOR IN CASE OF HIS DELINQUENCY.

STATE OF VERMONT, } To any Sheriff or Constable in the State,
— County. } Greeting.

Whereas, a rate bill and warrant for the collection of a school tax voted by the inhabitants of School District Number —, in the Town of — of — cents on the dollar, amounting in all to the sum of — dollars, and made payable on or before the — day of — A. D. 18— was duly delivered to —, the Collector of said District, for collection. And whereas the said — has failed to pay over the full amount of said rate bill by the time specified therefor, and is now delinquent in the sum of — dollars, which has been duly demanded of him; and whereas the Prudential Committee of said District have presented their petition in writing to me, one of the Justices of the Peace in said County of —, setting out the above facts, and praying that an extent may be issued against the said —, Collector as aforesaid, for the said sum of — dollars, now in arrears, and the said — having been duly summoned to appear and show cause why such extent should not be issued, has neglected to show any good cause why such extent should not issue for the arrears of said tax.

Therefore, By the authority of the State of Vermont, you are hereby commanded, that of the goods, chattels, or estate of the said ——— to be by him shown unto you or found within your precinct, you cause to be levied, and the same being disposed of according to law, you pay to the said Prudential Committee of said School District the said sum of — dollars, being the residue of said rate bill for which said collector is now in arrear, and also satisfy yourself for your own fees, and for want of the goods, chattels or stock of the said ——— to be by him shown unto you or found within your precinct, you are hereby commanded to take the body of the said ———, Collector as aforesaid, and him commit to the keeper of the common jail in ———, in said ——— County, within the said prison, who is hereby commanded to receive the said ———, and him safely keep until he pay the aforesaid sum of — dollars, and legal cost together with your fees, or otherwise be discharged or released according to law.

Hereof fail not, but of this extent and your doings thereon, make due return within sixty days.

Given under my hand at ———, this — day of —, 18—.

A. B——, *Justice of the Peace.*

No. 16.

LIST OF CHILDREN BETWEEN THE AGES OF 4 AND 18, AND THE HEADS OF FAMILIES RESIDENT IN THE DISTRICT ON THE 1ST OF JANUARY, ANNUALLY TO BE MADE BY THE DISTRICT CLERK, AND BY HIM RETURNED TO THE TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE BETWEEN THE 15TH AND 25TH DAYS OF FEBRUARY.

List of Children, Heads of Families, &c., in District No. — in —.

Heads of Families. Names of Children.

A. B.	C. B.,	H. B.,	R. B.	3
G. H.	F. H.,	W. H.,		2

No. of weeks school taught by male teachers, —

No. by female teachers, —

Amount of wages paid male teachers, exclusive of board, \$—

Amount paid female teachers, —

Cost of board for teachers, for year, —

Cost of fuel, furniture and incidentals, —

I certify the above to be true returns for District No. —, as required by law.

Attest,

C. D——, *District Clerk.*

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No. 17.

ABSTRACT FROM DISTRICT CLERK'S RETURNS, REQUIRED TO BE MADE BY TOWN CLERK ON OR BEFORE THE 1ST TUESDAY OF APRIL, ANNUALLY, AND DELIVERED TO TOWN SUPERINTENDENT.

Districts.	No. Heads of Families.	No. Children of school age.	Weeks taught by males.	Weeks taught by females.	Wages paid males.	Wages paid females.	Cost of board.
No. 1.							
" 2.							
" 3.							
	Cost of fuel, &c.	Share of Public money.					

The foregoing is a true statement of the statistics of the Common Schools in the Town of ———, as obtained by me from the returns of District Clerks, made to me on the first Tuesday in April, A. D. 18—. Attest, C. D., Town Clerk.

No. 18.

NOTICE BY SUPERINTENDENT OF TIME AND PLACE OF PUBLIC EXAMINATION OF TEACHERS.

Notice is hereby given to all persons who are intending to apply for situations as teachers in the Common Schools of the Town of ———, in the County of ———, that the public examination for teachers required by law within said town, will be held at ——— in said town, on the — day of [either in April or May, or November] at — o'clock in the — noon. All persons designing to teach in the Common Schools of said town, are desired to be present promptly at the time and place aforesaid.

All citizens are respectfully and cordially invited to attend.
A. B——, Town Superintendent of ———.

No. 19.

CERTIFICATE TO TEACHER.

TEACHER'S CERTIFICATE.

This certifies that on the ——— day of ——— A. D. 18—, C—— D——, of ———, was examined, and is approved as a teacher of Common Schools in the Town of ———.

X. Y——, Town Superintendent of the
Town of ———.

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No. 20.

SUPERINTENDENT'S LIST OF TEACHERS EXAMINED, TO BE LODGED IN TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE, ON OR BEFORE FEBRUARY 1ST, IN EACH YEAR.

I, ———, Town Superintendent of Schools in the Town of ———, hereby render the following as a statement of the different teachers examined by me since the first day of February last, together with the dates of their certificates.

A. B———, — day of ———, A. D. 18— ;
C. D———, " " " " "
E. F———, " " " " " &c., &c.

I certify that the above is a true and correct statement of what it purports to convey.

Dated at ———, this — day of ——— A. D. 18—.

X. Y———, *Town Superintendent of* ———.

No. 21.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REVOCATION OF TEACHER'S CERTIFICATE, TO BE FILED IN TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE, AND COPY THEREOF DELIVERED TO PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE AND TO TEACHER WHOSE CERTIFICATE IS REVOKED.

I, ———, Town Superintendent of Schools in the Town of ———, hereby certify that, upon repeated personal examinations of the school taught by ———, in the District No. —, in said town, I have become satisfied beyond a reasonable doubt, that the said ———, the teacher of said school, is incompetent to teach or govern said school properly, [or is setting an evil example before his school], and on that account, and pursuant to law in such cases made and provided, I hereby declare the certificate heretofore granted to said ———, liable to revocation, and the same is revoked.

X. Y———, *Town Superintendent of* ———.

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No. 22.

**SUPERINTENDENT'S ACCOUNT FOR SERVICES, TO BE PRESENTED TO THE COURT
AUDITOR, TOGETHER WITH THE RECEIPT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE BOARD
FOR STATISTICAL RETURNS.**

A. D. 18—. State of Vermont, in account with X. Y—, Superintendent of Schools for the Town of —, in — County, Dr.
May —, To one day spent in examination of teachers, \$1 00
To — days spent in visiting schools at the following dates, viz :
June —, and —, and — and —, 5 00
July —, and —, and — and —, and —, 6 00
November —, To one day examination of teachers, 1 00
To so much for Report made to March Meeting, \$

I certify the above and foregoing to be a true and correct account of services rendered by me officially.

X. Y—, *Town Superintendent of —.*

STATE OF VERMONT, }
— County, ss. } At —, this — day of — 18—,
Then personally appeared the said X. Y—, Superintendent, and made oath (or affirmation) to the correctness of his account, as above rendered.

Before me,

— — — — —, *Justice of the Peace.*

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Supplemental Report

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OF THE

VERMONT

BOARD OF EDUCATION,

NOVEMBER, 1867.



MONTPELIER:
FREEMAN STEAM PRINTING ESTABLISHMENT
1867.



REPORT.

*To the Honorable, the Legislature of the
State of Vermont, now in session:*

GENTLEMEN :—The Board of Education herewith submit a supplement to their Eleventh Annual Report.

This supplement is made necessary by the peculiar, and, indeed, unprecedented circumstances in which that report and the accompanying report of the late Secretary of the Board have been presented to your honorable body and to the people of the State. The law makes it the duty of the Secretary, "by and with the advice of the Board," "to exert himself constantly and faithfully to promote the highest interests of education in the State," and annually to present to the Board a report of his official doings, with suggestions for improving the organization of the schools, and the mode of instruction therein. The law makes him the executive officer of the Board, and contemplates that he will put in execution the plans which they set on foot. It does not make him the adviser of the Board, except in one specified particular, and even in that particular his advice has only the weight of a suggestion.

Until the present year, this has been the practical construction put upon the law by the Board and by the Secretary. In his last report, however, the late Secretary has reversed this construction, and has proceeded upon the principle that it was the duty of the Board to act by and with the advice of the Secretary. If his report had been

made to the Board, as required by law, the necessity of this supplementary report would have been obviated, and what the Board are now obliged to say could have been incorporated into their original report. But the report of the late Secretary has never yet been presented to the Board, even since it was printed, but they have been compelled to procure it by such means as could be made available.

Some things in that report seem to require notice and correction by the Board.

It is affirmed that the selection of books by the Board "was made with such haste as utterly to preclude all possibility of the calm and considerate attention due to the importance of the subject, and even to propriety," and "less than six hours" is said to be the time in fact given to the decision. So far is this from being the truth, that for three full months prior to the decision, the Board had been in possession of all, or nearly all, the books from which the selection was made, and had given them all a calm, considerate and protracted examination. For more than two months particular members of the Board had given special attention to particular classes of books especially assigned to them for examination. To show how rigid and minute that examination was, it may be mentioned by way of instance, that one member of the Board performed the wearisome drudgery of reading every article in five series of reading books, comparing each book with every other book of the same grade, article by article. Other members of the Board examined other classes of books in an equally laborious manner. A decision preceded by an examination so protracted as that, hardly deserves to be called hasty, especially as it was also preceded by a discussion, in which, the late Secretary himself being witness, "*ample opportunity* was given for all who wished to be heard in regard to the merits of

their books." After the books had been thoroughly examined, their merits fully discussed, and the Board had matured their judgments, it would seem that even a period of less than six hours was sufficient in which to express their judgments. While it is true that there were difference of opinion, and diversities of judgment, it is also true that in the final decision the Board were unanimous in every particular except one.

It is affirmed that the circumstances preceding, attending and following the decision were such as to indicate a pre-judgment of the case, and so to detract from the weight that might otherwise attach to the decision, and several specifications are presented. 1st, It was currently reported and generally believed at the time of the Waterbury meeting that the majority of the Board had made a previous arrangement by which the leading books had been determined upon before the hearing. It is sufficient to say in regard to this, that the current report was incorrect, and the general belief was unfounded. There was no such arrangement nor any attempt to make such an arrangement. 2d, "This feeling was strengthened by the palpable haste with which the formal decision was hurried through." But that feeling was without good grounds, and the palpable haste was really the result of long deliberation. 3d, Mr. Pearl and Mr. Cilley were invited to make a joint report on geographies. But they were so invited only upon the condition that their judgments agreed together and with the judgment of those members of the Board to whom the subject of geography was especially committed. 4th, "The gentlemen reported to have agreed beforehand upon a list, voted uniformly together throughout." But they did not uniformly vote together, and when they did it was not in pursuance of any previous agreement to that effect. 5th and 6th, The Board attempted subsequently to make their action in regard to Guyot's

Geographies appear different from what it really was. But the Board did not attempt any such action. There were two or three motions made in reference to the adoption of Guyot's Geographies, and there was a slight difference of opinion among different members of the Board as to which motion actually prevailed. Soon after the selection was made, a difference arose between the publishers of Mitchell's and Guyot's series. This difference was brought to the notice of some members of the Board at the extra session of the Legislature, but no action was attempted. At Bristol, the first time the Board were together after making the selection, this difference of opinion was talked over in a friendly manner, and the views of all harmonized so as to accord with the facts, without any motion or attempt to change the result.

It is affirmed that the method pursued in the hearings was uncourteous and unfair towards the teachers who were called to advise with the Board. This complaint divides itself into two specifications, that the deliberations of the Board were held in private, and that the books recommended by the teachers were not adopted in every instance. It did not occur to the Board, till they read the report of the late Secretary, that the opinions of eminent teachers which they were required to obtain, were to control the judgment of the Board. And having re-examined the law, they fail to see that they were required to accept those opinions as conclusive, especially when they were quite as diverse as the opinions of the Board. When one teacher strenuously recommends Eaton's Arithmetic, and another, equally eminent, recommends Greenleaf's, whose opinion should the Board follow, or what should they do, but that which in fact they did do, and which the law required them to do,—select the one which in their judgment was "best suited for instruction and use in the schools?" When one teacher recommends Quackenbos'

History, and another Lossing's, why should the Board concur in the opinion of the former rather than that of the latter, or of the latter rather than of the former? Who shall decide when teachers disagree? The law says the Board of Education—and the Board obeyed the law. It is, however, the truth, notwithstanding what the late Secretary affirms in that regard, that nearly half the books finally selected, have the published sanction of one of the two teachers whose opinions concerning them were procured. In respect to a part of the rest the teachers expressed no opinion whatever, and in respect to some others, they expressed a bare opinion, unaccompanied by any reason, to which opinion the Board gave such attention as seemed to be its due.

After what is said in the report of the late Secretary in regard to unfairness and discourtesy towards teachers in excluding them from the final deliberations of the Board, it may be difficult to believe that it was through his influence that the meetings of the Board were private rather than public. It is nevertheless true that in compliance with his urgent recommendation, and in opposition to the expressed wishes of a part of the Board, it was voted "that in the examination of text-books the sessions of the Board will be conducted in private." This vote was passed on Monday, as appears of record in the handwriting of the late Secretary, and when he, at noon of Thursday, informed the teachers that the Board would conduct their deliberations in private, he informed them not of a new decision discourteous to them, and against which his soul revolted, but of an old decision made at his special instance and request. If a single teacher who remained after all the rest had returned home was finally permitted to be present, it is difficult to see how courtesy to him could be discourtesy to any one else.

The Board forbear to pursue this line of comment.

They would not have pursued it thus far, but for the possibility that their silence might be construed as an admission of the truth of the various statements upon which they have commented. If they arrest the discussion at this point, their silence does not give assent to any of the allegations which remain unanswered.

The late Secretary has recommended that the Legislature revise the decision of the Board by substituting some books for those recommended, or at least by adding them to the list. But it is difficult to see how a body so large as the Legislature and pressed with the consideration of so many and so weighty subjects, can give the books in question that careful examination which is desirable. In the language of the late Secretary as applied to the Board : "To suppose that so many men, upon so difficult a subject, and one proverbially so prolific of differences of opinion, could in so short a time reconcile all diversities of judgment, clear away all misunderstandings and differences of views, and all with that freedom of discussion, comparison of convictions, and that calm and unprejudiced consideration eminently due to the occasion, is simply preposterous." If, however, the Legislature should decide to consider the subject, the Board submit a few remarks for their consideration.

It is recommended by the late Secretary that Cornell's Geographies be substituted for Mitchell's. Whether this can be done and yet preserve the good faith of the State, is a question worthy of grave consideration. The law of last session, under which the selection of books has been made, declares that the books so selected, "shall be and remain authoritative and binding," for the term of five years. Since the selection of Mitchell's Geographies, the publishers, relying upon that law and upon the contract implied in it, have brought out a new edition of their Intermediate Geography especially adapted to the schools of Ver-

mont, with a new and carefully corrected map of the State, and several pages of letter-press and questions relating to the geography of the State. This edition is now ready for use. Having incurred this large expense, in reliance upon a law of Vermont, would it be just to them and creditable to Vermont, to exclude those books from our schools, and leave them, almost entirely unsalable as they would need be in any other state, upon the hands of the publishers?

But not to insist upon that point. Admitting it to be true, as affirmed by the late Secretary, that Cornell's Geographies were regarded by the Board ten years ago as the best then extant, it does not follow of necessity that they are the best now extant. On the contrary, it does follow that unless they have been subjected to continual revision, correction and improvement, they are not the best extant. In fact, the general dissatisfaction with these books was one of the reasons which induced the Board last year to recommend a new selection of text-books. Many of the most experienced teachers in the State were emphatic in condemning them. Neither of the two eminent teachers whose opinions on geographical books were sought by the Board, had a word to say in favor of them. The publishers did not ask that they should be continued in use, but presented specimen maps and proof-sheets of a few pages of a new edition so completely reconstructed that to introduce it would be nothing less than to introduce an entirely new work. It did not seem judicious to adopt a book not yet published, nor does it now seem judicious to adopt, without examination, a book, the introduction of which will occasion every whit as much inconvenience and expense as the introduction of that which has been thoroughly examined and found to possess peculiar merits.

The late Secretary especially complains of the action of the Board in the selection of reading books. This was

the only selection made on which the Board were not finally unanimous, and here there was but one dissenting vote. The late Secretary admits that he was committed to, and had for some time, advocated Willson's readers. The Board were committed to no series; and on the recommendation of the late Secretary, adopted a resolution to examine and adopt each book upon its merits. Were they not in condition to judge of the merits as impartially as the Secretary? In what particulars were the Board to examine these books to determine their merits? The elementary sounds with their combinations,—exercises in articulation exemplifying philosophically and practically these combinations;—rules and principles for elocution, systematically arranged for class drill, practical application of these principles adapted to the appropriate reading of different styles of prose and poetry,—the structure and forms of sentences in prose and verse; and the figures of speech;—all these were to be carefully considered. Simplicity and style, especially in the primary books, combined with interesting and instructive matter were to be regarded. Especial attention was to be paid to the grading of the books as series, that the pupils might pass by easy and regular steps to the higher literature. Care was to be taken that the punctuation was systematic, and that the sentences were free from objectional and inelegant expressions, and that the series furnished a suitable class of pieces for practical school purposes; that the books contained sentiments and instruction worthy to be treasured in the memory, and calculated to inspire a love for whatever is excellent and praiseworthy. These and other excellencies were all to be sought for in each series. Each series was examined in all these particulars. The result was that the Board selected the Progressive Series as the most meritorious;—and that, too, after having fully heard and carefully considered all the reasons urged by the late

Secretary, as repeated in his report, in favor of Willson's Series and against the Progressive. It was then urged, as now, that some teachers were tired of the old books, and for that reason desired new ones. Can this be a sufficient reason for discarding a series of books, which, as the late Secretary says in his report, was selected by that very *able* first Board of Education upon their merits? Will excellence tarnish by use or the old masterpieces in literature ever die of age?

The scientific matter contained in Willson's Series is the only excellence claimed for it by the late Secretary. Can science be effectually taught by mere reading lessons? The experiment now on trial by Willson is not the first of the kind. In England it has been thoroughly tested, first by Dr. McCulloch in his course of elementary reading in science and literature; and again by Rev. David Blair in his class book of reading lessons adapted for use in schools. But after the novelty had passed, the result was a failure in each case, and the old works of Enfield and Bell kept the field. No reason can be given, if the scientific matter in Willson's Readers is fitted for elocutionary practice, why grammars and geographies should not also be adopted as reading books. The encyclopedical character of Willson's Readers, gilding the scientific pill with scraps of poetry, seems to the Board quite inappropriate. This strange medley of science, anecdote and poetry,—here a little geology, there a little ichthyology, here an array of Greek proper names and Latin scientific terms, with rhyme forced in to relieve the dark scientific background does not seem to the Board to furnish appropriate exercises, most needed and best fitted for instruction in the art of reading. If it be true, as urged, which we deny, that these scraps of science found in Willson's readers are all that many of our youth will have the opportunity of acquiring before leaving school, do they acquire them by

skimming them over as a reading lesson? A knowledge of science is acquired by *study*, not insinuated in a sportive way by anecdotes and patches of rhyme. The Board believe that the scientific matter contained in these readers, is wholly inappropriate for reading lessons—worthless, for the most part, for elocutionary exercises, and that it does not secure the scientific education claimed for it. But if science can be taught in this way, there are other subjects which have equal and even prior claims upon the attention of the young. It was a saying of the great German poet, Goethe, himself a man of science, that we must encourage the beautiful, for the useful would take care of itself. There is a world of thought, moral, political, practical, religious and æsthetic, as important to the moral and intellectual nature of the youth, as a knowledge of the classification of birds and beasts. Every reading book should contain that pure literature which brings before the pupil's mind, ideas, words, style, and the use and management of his native language, which gives to elocution its lights and shades, its varieties, its emotional tones, its pathos and its animation—pure literature in that endless variety, which will permeate and touch the soul of the pupil by some, if not every, avenue of approach, and lead it to a spontaneous and natural outburst of eloquence. Can the dry details of science do this?

Is not a page in the dictionary as suitable for the development of educational ability as much of the matter in Willson's Readers? In giving instruction in the art of reading, does not the teacher need the exercises best adapted to that specific end, just as in teaching music he needs the appropriate tunes and words? Is not a relish for the proper use of words, for the graces of style, for the significance, flexibility and compressed power of language, and the elevating influences of the noble truths conveyed in our highest poetry, far more important and of

more practical utility to the pupil than a knowledge of the divisions, or of the habits of the shark family? Are not the noble specimens of English, contained in the Progressive series, the great thoughts expressed in aptest language, in extracts from Shakspeare, Milton, Cicero, Chatham, Webster, Burke, Irving, Addison, and many other of the best writers, the noble and patriotic tributes to the heroes and statesmen of our own and other nations, more important to the young, in a mere utilitarian point of view, than all the details in Willson's readers in relation to lizards, turtles, snakes, bugs and birds?

If it be said that Willson's series gives a portion of space to extracts of a purely literary character, we are of the opinion that that space is very disproportionate and not well filled. They are wanting almost entirely, in oratorical and declamatory pieces, in specimens of eloquence, whether of the Senate or public assembly, and in patriotic pieces fitted to inspire a love of our country, her heroes and her statesmen, and a pride and confidence in our republican institutions. On a careful review, with all due respect to the views and wishes of the late Secretary, and of the teachers of whom he speaks, the Board find no reason for changing the selection they have made.

In regard to arithmetics, the Board refer to the reasons given in the report to which this is a supplement, as amply sufficient to justify the selection which they made. Those reasons the late Secretary does not attempt to controvert, nor does he offer any reasons that should have induced the Board to decide otherwise, nor point out any particulars in which the books that he recommends excel those recommended by the Board. Colburn's Intellectual Arithmetic is doubtless an excellent book, but Greenleaf's is equally good, much more extensively used in the State, and was adopted upon the unanimous report of the committee of the Board to whom the subject was referred, and with the

tacit approbation of the late Secretary. There was some difference of opinion in regard to written arithmetics, but Walton's was not recommended by either of the practical teachers or members of the Board to whom that subject was assigned. The fact that there is such a book as Greenleaf's Higher Arithmetic, which is not recommended, was not urged against the adoption of Greenleaf's New Practical, nor did it appear that Greenleaf's Higher Arithmetic was used to any extent in the State. As before mentioned, at the suggestion of the late Secretary, the Board adopted a resolution that their selection should be based upon the intrinsic merits of the books examined, and they are clearly of opinion that Greenleaf's New Practical has greater merits as a text-book than any other similar book. In fact, the author of the book now recommended by the late Secretary, complained to more than one member of the Board that the peculiarities and excellences of his arithmetic had been embodied in the New Practical. In the opinion of the Board the New Practical embodies all that is excellent in any other book of the same kind, and has some excellences that are peculiarly its own. Nor do they believe that the violent dislike to Greenleaf's Higher Arithmetic, frequently expressed by the late Secretary, is a sufficient reason for excluding from the schools of the State, all books bearing the name of Greenleaf, even though they have none of the objectionable features of that work.

The policy of the State, clearly defined and steadily pursued for the last ten years, has been to secure the utmost possible uniformity in text-books. In the recent selection the Board have aimed to secure also the utmost attainable excellence, and they are fully persuaded that in this endeavor they have not been unsuccessful. To pursue the course recommended by the late Secretary would surely defeat the policy of uniformity, and, as they believe, would

introduce books of inferior merit. They renew, therefore, their recommendation of the books selected and announced in their report; and, in this recommendation, they are joined by their late associate, Mr. Edward Conant, not now a member of the Board, who, though differing from the majority of the Board in regard to some books, now concurs with them in the opinion that the interests of our common schools will be best promoted by introducing the whole list of books.

All which is respectfully submitted.

PLINY H. WHITE, MERRITT CLARK, JONATHAN ROSS, D. D. GORHAM, A. J. SANBORN,	}	Board of Education.
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